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THE BEST SHORT STORIES: 1937

THE
BEST SHORT STORIES
1937
AND THE
YEARBOOK OF THE AMERICAN
SHORT STORY

EDITED BY
EDWARD J. O'BRIEN



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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TO

EDITA AND IRA VICTOR MORRIS

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INTRODUCTION

I

I SHOULD like to make a plea this year for a literary form which is undeservedly neglected in this country, and I am prompted to make this plea by the fact that three excellent examples of this form have come to my attention during the past year and are reprinted in this book. In Italy this form is called the *novella* and has been practised for centuries. In Germany and Austria it is called the *novelle* and has been a favourite literary form for a century. In America it has been employed by Edith Wharton in *Ethan Frome* and by Henry James in *The Turn of the Screw*. In France it has a supreme masterpiece in Flaubert's *Un Coeur Simple*. There is no word in English for this form. A novelette is a skeleton novel. A *novella*, on the contrary, is a story of sustained breath which accepts all the limitations of the short story unities. Why should we not borrow the Italian word, discard italics, and call this form quite simply the novella? The three novellas I am printing this year are *Marching Orders* by I. V. Morris, *The Iron City* by Lovell Thompson, and *Passenger to Bali* by Ellis St. Joseph. I think you would find it interesting to examine these three fine stories with some care and to discover for yourselves those common qualities in them which justify the form. And I think magazine editors might very well consider whether the form is not definitely worthy of encouragement by them in the public interest.

Another plea which I should like to make this year is addressed to the editors of American magazines with large national circulations. Is it not really possible for you to value the intelligent response of your public to good stories a little more highly than you do? Less than a generation ago I can remember how *The Pictorial Review*, a national woman's magazine then as it is now, built up a vast circulation by boldly publishing good stories which Arthur T. Vance, who was a great editor and a courageous editor, liked. There were always two or three stories in any given issue of that magazine by such men and women as Wilbur Daniel Steele, Charles Caldwell Dobie, Stacy Aumonier, and May Sinclair.

What national magazine would venture to print the stories of their successors today as a matter of regular policy? Yet why not? I do not think that Arthur Vance would have ventured to print Sherwood Anderson and Ernest Hemingway, but I know that he would have printed the stories by Robert Buckner and Elma Godchaux, Edward Harris Heth and R. H. Linn, William March and Ellis St. Joseph, Edita Morris and Leane Zugsmith in this volume, and that he would not have waited until I had published them. The Tess Slesingers and William Saroyans are wooed by Hollywood, which thinks in terms of much wider and much less sophisticated audiences than the national magazines. Why are you editors letting our good writers escape to Hollywood? It seems to me that there is an ironic lesson for a good many people embodied somewhere in any adequate answer to this question.

II

To repeat what I have said in these pages in previous years, for the benefit of the reader as yet unacquainted with my standards and principles of selection, I shall point out that I have set myself the task of disengaging the essential human qualities in our contemporary fiction, which, when chronicled conscientiously by our literary artists, may fairly be called a criticism of life. I am not at all interested in formulae, and organized criticism at its best would be nothing more than dead criticism, as all dogmatic interpretation of life is always dead. What has interested me, to the exclusion of other things, is the fresh, living current which flows through the best American work, and the psychological and imaginative quality which American writers have conferred upon it.

No substance is of importance in fiction unless it is organic substance, that is to say, substance in which the pulse of life is beating. Inorganic fiction has been our curse in the past, and bids fair to remain so, unless we exercise much greater artistic discrimination than we display at present.

The present record covers the period from January 1 to December 31, 1936, inclusive. During this period I have sought to select from the magazine stories published by American authors those which have rendered life imaginatively in organic substance and artistic form. Substance is something achieved by the artist in

every act of creation, rather than something already present, and accordingly a fact or group of facts in a story only attains substantial embodiment when the artist's power of compelling imaginative persuasion transforms them into a living truth. The first test of a short story, therefore, in any qualitative analysis, is to decide how vitally compelling the writer makes his selected facts or incidents. This may conveniently be called the test of substance.

But a second test is necessary if the story is to take rank above other stories. The true artist will seek to shape this living substance into the most beautiful and satisfying form by skilful selection and arrangement of his materials, and by the most direct and appealing presentation of it in portrayal and characterization.

The short stories which I have examined in this study, as in previous years, have fallen naturally into four groups. The first consists of those stories which fail, in my opinion, to survive either the test of substance or the test of form. These stories are not listed in the yearbook.

The second group consists of those stories which may fairly claim that they survive either the test of substance or the test of form. Each of these stories may claim to possess either distinction of technique alone, or more frequently, I am glad to say, a persuasive sense of life in them to which the reader responds with some part of his own experience. Stories included in this group are indicated in the yearbook index by a single asterisk prefixed to the title.

The third group, which is composed of stories of still greater distinction, includes such narratives as may lay convincing claim to a second reading, because each of them has survived both tests, the test of substance and the test of form. Stories included in this group are indicated in the yearbook index by two asterisks prefixed to the title.

Finally, I have recorded the names of a small group of stories which possess, I believe, the even finer distinction of uniting genuine substance and artistic form in a closely woven pattern with such sincerity that these stories may fairly claim a position in American literature. If all these stories by American authors were republished, they would not occupy more space than a few novels of average length. My selection of them does not imply the

critical belief that they are great stories. A year which produced one great story would be an exceptional one. It is simply to be taken as meaning that I have found the equivalent of a few volumes worthy of republication among all the stories published during the period under consideration. These stories are indicated in the yearbook by three asterisks prefixed to the title and are listed in the special 'Roll of Honor.' The general and particular results of my study will be found explained and carefully detailed in the supplementary part of this volume.

III

I shall now comment briefly on the stories which I am reprinting this year. I make no attempt to analyze the stories. I merely wish to suggest why these stories seem to me more memorable than the others which I have read during the past year.

The Man Who Won the War by Robert Buckner. This is a *made* story. It relies on artifice for persuasion, and this is theoretically unjustifiable. The characterization is even somewhat shadowy. The story, however, is an unusually successful *tour de force*, justifying itself by sheer taletelling which induces a willing suspension of disbelief. It convinces you by the accumulation of tiny circumstantial detail. Notice how the effect of historical remoteness is achieved by the distance set between the primary narrator and the protagonist of the story.

The Last Equation by Roger Burlingame. This is an excellent psychological study of the thin clearness of the mind when the body is weakened by illness. It reflects clearly that emotional quality of happy recognition of which the mind is capable when it is reduced by illness to pure mathematical abstraction relatively free from the impact of material reality. It also reflects the manner in which that lucidity afterwards heightens the reality of familiar people and things, so that they are seen again with extraordinary freshness as they really are and as if they were being seen for the first time.

The Voyage Out by Morley Callaghan. May I call attention in this story to the author's fine sense of form, the gentle and almost tender diffidence of his characterization, the closely woven texture of the narrative, the subtle selective use of detail, the economy of

statement, and the precision of eye? The cool outward detachment of the writer preserves an exactly focussed vision of reality. The silent implications of the story are as clear and more important than the outward event.

Enter Daisy; to Her, Alexandra by Charles Cooke. Here also the presentation of the characters is strictly cool and objective. The two women are each impartially shown to us with a clear and precise estimate of their separate human values. Neither is shown at the expense of the other, and the contrast between their outward seeming and their inner spirit is tolerantly and sympathetically portrayed. It would have been easy to have moralized or to have sentimentalized this story so that it appealed meretriciously to a much larger audience. It is the sobriety of handling here which I wish specially to commend.

Fool About a Horse by William Faulkner. Mr. Faulkner is most successful as a short story writer in direct narrative based on supposed memory by an eye-witness or a participant. The rhythm and color of folk speech lend immediate actuality to this story which depends chiefly on humorous characterization for its effect. Once again Mr. Faulkner presents his story as seen in retrospect through the eyes of a wise child who perceives what is essential without rationalizing about it. The story should be compared for its technical mastery with *That Evening Sun Go Down* and *That Will Be Fine*.

Goodbye to Cap'm John by S. S. Field. The author's primary interest in this story is to present a character in heightened portraiture against a background which is an extension of that character's personality, and to etch in significant detail by tiny unstressed lines. The story is told with expansive leisureliness, and the values of its style are all spoken values. There is a legendary quality in the story which transcends its immediate setting in time and space. It ends quietly in a moment of arrested significant reality.

Glory, Glory, Hallelujah! by Martha Foley. Compare this story with *Her Own Sweet Simplicity* by the same author in *The Best Short Stories: 1936*. It has the same clear vigorous narrative quality, the same sharp perception and exact portraiture, and the same closeness of texture. Miss Foley's quiet humor is shrewd and deeply understanding. Her ear for phrase is faultless. Test it by

reading the Black Shadow's letter to the little girl in which nine out of ten good short-story writers would have faltered and introduced a note of falsity. There is no sign of overemphasis or of striving after effect in the story. Its artlessness is a difficult achievement.

Chains by Elma Godchaux. The rich texture of this story depends as much upon setting as upon character. The chief character is measured by the landscape in which he moves which enhances his dignity and which defines his ultimate freedom. We see him against the sky and beside a mighty river in a significant arrested moment. His portrait is defined by contrast with his neighbors to whom the sky and the river have not the same reality. Notice particularly the sure and quiet ending with its rippling overtones.

The Poet by Albert Halper. Like William Faulkner's story in this volume, *The Poet* is related to us as a memory of childhood. This device permits the author a focus distant enough to seem perfectly objective, yet intimate enough for directness of portraiture. The story is very quietly told with simplicity and grace, and the minor characters are clearly realized and carefully disposed so that they serve to heighten the portrait of the poet whom we see through their eyes as well as through the eyes of the narrator. The ending is sure and unstressed.

The Snows of Kilimanjaro by Ernest Hemingway. I think this story ranks with *The Undefeated* and *Fifty Grand*, Mr. Hemingway's two acknowledged short-story masterpieces. It is very closely written, exact to ear and eye, and the emotional springs of the story are explored to the bottom, while the expression of the emotion is kept on ice. Nothing is irrelevant. Every intonation and inflection matters. The artist's energy is rigidly controlled for his purpose. The story marks the beginning of a new and far more important cycle in Mr. Hemingway's work. Its publication is one of the four or five landmarks in the history of the American Short Story since Stephen Crane.

Homecoming by Edward Harris Heth. This group portrait is a successful study in tolerant irony. While the writing in the earlier part of the story is a little huddled, the leisurely progress of the narrative is warranted by the completeness of the portraiture. There is a fine sensuous quality of gusto in the rendering of the background, as well as an unstressed sureness in the development

of the characterization. It is difficult to handle so many characters adequately in a short story, but Mr. Heth gains the effect he desires by grouping them and regrouping them. The half-unspoken criticism of American society is devastating.

The Surgeon and the Nun by Paul Horgan. This story would have gained by firmer compression. I admire it specially for its firm and forthright narrative ability, its successful characterization by implication rather than by statement, its detached lucidity, and its direct grasp of significant atmospheric detail. The dramatic values are absolutely right, and the necessary suspense is skillfully maintained without artificial mechanical trick or false emphasis.

The Girl with the Flaxen Hair by Manuel Komroff. Mr. Komroff's best narratives are successful exercises in oral tale-telling. They have that air of authority with which the ancient mariner beguiled the unwilling wedding guest. His ironic humor persuades you that the impossible is as true in fact as his impossibilities are really true in symbol. Listen to the modulation of this bazaar tale-teller's voice, his circumstantial evidence, his persuasive ironic philosophy. Mr. Komroff is one of the best of our sadder humorists.

Awakening and the Destination by David E. Krantz. This is the most interesting short story based on the 'stream of consciousness' technique which I have found during the past year. It would be improved if the emotional tensivity were somewhat relaxed. The screw is turned slightly too far. This caveat aside, I think that the story is unusually successful as an American effort to offer us a significant cross-section of an average mind sensitive to the physical and emotional impact of little frustrations. It is actually a study in the effect of speed and haste and thoughtlessness in a mechanical civilization on a sensitive and immature adolescent whose emotional awareness is tangled in circumstance. Notice how effective the train is as a symbol of flux in American life.

Second Wife by Henry Harrison Kroll. Direct narrative in dialect is one of the most dangerous forms of short-story writing. It is full of pitfalls for the immature writer, particularly if he suffers from an excess of sensibility. Mr. Kroll has successfully avoided most of these pitfalls, and gained most of the advantages which the form offers to the wary writer. The story is slightly sentimental-

ized, and this is a defect, but Mr. Kroll's perception is so sharp, his portrait of the girl so cruelly incisive and detached, his irony so mordant, that he triumphs over most of the obstacles that his subject matter offered. I admire the direct speech of the last paragraph very much.

The Intrigue of Mr. S. Yamamoto by R. H. Linn. In this story also the author successfully avoids the numerous pitfalls of the method of presentation which he has chosen. The technique is artificial and the story seems to me to be deliberately manufactured in an artificial language, but the characterization is so deft and reticent, the irony so neat, that we forgive the deceptions which exist. The story is a piece of skilful sleight of hand full of quiet humor, and we believe the writer for the moment when he assures us that there is nothing up his sleeve.

Titty's Dead and Tatty Weeps by Ursula MacDougall. This story, like that by Mr. Krantz, is an interesting 'stream of consciousness' story. I admire its quiet ease and reticence, and its use of an old folk tale as background for a personal experience. It is interesting to observe how monologue is used successfully to build up a physical portrait of the speaker. The use of suggestion is deft and subtle; the economy of handling noteworthy.

Let Nothing You Dismay by Allen McGinnis. The story is told with cool objectivity, and is excellently focussed. It is deliberately undertold, and no detail is even slightly underlined. The characters are made slightly quaint which is, I think, a defect, as quaintness tends to the portrayal of types rather than individuals. This defect is largely redeemed by the restraint in handling, and the dialogue is excellent. It would have been easy to allow an excess of sensibility to mar this story. The author, however, has balanced the emotional scales quite evenly.

Maybe the Sun Will Shine by William March. This is an admirably tender and reticent story told with quiet irony. It is warmly human and unusually restrained in its ending. Most writers would have been tempted to carry the story on from the point where it really ends instead of leaving the inevitable sequel to the reader's imagination. Notice the simple freshly minted words in which the story is told, and the fine ear for nuances of intonation in the dialogue.

A Blade of Grass by Edita Morris. This story has space and

leisure to an unusual degree. It comes out of old Swedish folk memories, and, unlike most American stories, the author's personality informs it unobtrusively with grace and vigor. It is almost a modern fairy tale. There is a quiet, musical undercurrent throughout the story which I find refreshing in its simplicity. You will observe that the tale unfolds in a series of pictures each of which is carefully framed, and the transitions from picture to picture are subtly contrived. The musical undercurrent wells forth freshly and joyously at the end like a clear bubbling spring.

Marching Orders by I. V. Morris. This seems to me the most noteworthy short story of the year, and one of the five or six most important American stories of our generation. I should set it beside Whit Burnett's *Sherrel* and Alan Marshall's *Death and Transfiguration* and Allen Seager's *This Town and Salamanca*. The ending is inevitable in the beginning, and the slow and sure unfolding of the protagonist's destiny is handled in a masterly manner. 'Death is always suicide': this conclusion arrests and holds our attention and sets our mind travelling backwards through the whole sequence of apparently chance events which shape the story.

The Old Order by Katherine Anne Porter. I reprint this story because it is an unfalteringly complete realization of a character difficult to portray without embarking on a novel, and because Miss Porter's work seems to me to bring an element of quiet and stillness into American short-story writing which it badly needs. This stillness is charged with meaning all the more pregnant because it is so quietly voiced. The author's selection of significant detail deserves close study. Her prose style is distinguished, and she knows how to leave the last word unsaid.

A Passenger to Bali by Ellis St. Joseph. This is a fine piece of conscious craftsmanship in which the author's studied artifice is not always successfully concealed. In this respect it suffers to some degree by comparison with Lovell Thompson's story, *The Iron City*. I am not satisfied, for example, that the wheel of a steamship is bound up as directly with the rudder as the author implies. Granting him this strain on my credulity, however, I think he has succeeded brilliantly in presenting a character and in devising circumstances adequate to show this character in action.

The Crusader by William Saroyan. As a free fantasia on a

chosen theme, this seems to me Mr. Saroyan's most successful story this year. It is the most successful because, while in no sense sacrificing the expression of the author's rich personal philosophy, the author has managed to realize a character outside himself more completely than usual, and so to avoid the characteristic solipsism which has usually embodied both his strength as an artist and his weakness.

Hair by Jesse Stuart. This story confirms my belief that Mr. Stuart's poetic perceptions are most poetic when they are expressed in the finely modulated folk speech of his prose. The characterization is excellent, the direct narrative crisp, eager, and sinewy, the sense of atmosphere admirably adjusted to the requirements of the story, and the irony neither transparent nor muffled. The story would be improved if the sentiment of the narrator had been curbed slightly more. The final picture is excellent.

Lieutenant Pearson by Benedict Thielen. A triumph of quiet understatement. The portrait of the protagonist is deftly drawn in many little touches of sly insinuation while the writer laughs quietly to himself. The story is a little cruel in its analysis. Notice particularly what the wife does *not* say and does *not* do. Some of the best effects are repetitive without stress.

The Iron City by Lovell Thompson. This is, in my opinion, one of the three most memorable stories of the year, to be set beside *Marching Orders* and *A Blade of Grass*. It is, of course, a contrived story, but the contrivance is well concealed and always kept secondary to the characterization and the atmosphere. It owes a good deal to the influence of Conrad, yet stands free of Conrad in its own right. I would specially commend the music of its fine prose as well as the author's gift for presenting heightened pictures without apparent strain.

Arrival on a Holiday by Wilson Wright. I admire this story for the casual grace of its narration, the easy languor with which it is told, the exact use of eye and ear to report, and the tolerant humor with which the author presents his report without moralizing comment or undue definition of the obvious. It was a difficult achievement.

Room in the World by Leane Zugsmith. This story shows a few slight signs of contrivance, but the characterization and the dialogue are so good that the contrivance may easily be forgiven.

INTRODUCTION

xxiii

It is the best proletarian story of the year, I think. And the ending is superb.

And now, as I suggested in this place last year, I should like you to consider the book as a whole in retrospect. American life has many facets of interest, and I have sought to make this book a representative cross-section of contemporary American life as it is being interpreted by our best short-story writers. I like to think of these annual collections as permanent records of the changing moods and emotions of the American people. Our short-story writers are explorers, and these books record from year to year the most interesting things about American life which they have found.

EDWARD J. O'BRIEN

NEW YORK, *January* 18, 1937

THE MAN WHO WON THE WAR¹

By ROBERT BUCKNER

(From *The Atlantic Monthly*)

ONCE to every writer there comes the perfect story, straight from life. But the great fault of most true stories is their improbability: it is far simpler to imagine a convincing plot than to borrow one from actual facts. Neither the official records of the Belgian War Office in Brussels nor the British Admiralty Archives in London contain the whole proof of what I am about to tell. The sole legal evidence, I can assure you, is buried in a small stone urn on the coast of Flanders, and in the embittered heart of an exiled Englishman.

I

Late on a winter evening in 1927, I was returning to England after a holiday spent with friends in Cologne. The Brussels Express was running far behind time, and I remember how it sped down the dark Ruhr Valley toward the Belgian border as if frightened by the red flares from the steel furnaces. It was January and bitter cold. The windows sweated in rivulets, between the frost and the overheated train.

At Düren I descended to the platform for a breath of the wet night air. When I returned to my compartment the only other occupant was awake, filling his pipe and glancing absently at the station.

'What place is this, please?' he asked in German.

'Düren, I believe,' I replied in English, and smiled.

'I say, are you British?' he exclaimed with mild interest, halting the match midway to his face.

'No, American.'

'Oh,' he murmured, and turned back to his pipe.

The train pulled slowly through the town, across the Ruhr bridge

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and the black river jeweled with the lights of barges. Suddenly in the north the sky flamed red again, throwing a weird infernal glow over the dreary plain and the mountainous slag heaps.

'Looks like Hell, doesn't it?'

'Hell?' The Englishman laughed shortly. 'Aye, they turn out a rather good grade of Hell here. One of the best.'

'What do you mean?'

'Steel!' he barked, removing the briar and pointing with its stem. 'Steel for guns and shells!' And then quietly, as if to himself, 'Oh, the fools, the bloody fools! Didn't they get enough of it last time?'

This outburst from one whose countrymen are usually so taciturn and reserved alarmed me at first. But it also awakened my senses, drugged by the stale air and a desire to sleep. I began to study my companion with new interest.

He was perhaps fifty years old, tall, his powerful body contradicted by a face which bore the marks of many illnesses. The effect was that of an oak tree whose death had begun in the top-most branches. But his gray eyes were keen and friendly. He wore a dark flannel suit, brown brogues, and blue shirt, that uniform of the Englishman abroad. His luggage consisted of one battered suitcase and a square, paper-wrapped parcel, lying beside him on the seat. From the bitter tone of his remark about the war, together with his general bearing, I put him down as an ex-officer.

'Do you think the Germans are arming again?' I asked in surprise. It was exciting news then, since I had seen only poor people trying desperately to be happy around their Christmas trees.

'They can never forget,' he nodded. 'Like the Irish, they are a fighting people. Ten years, twenty — they can wait. Only, God help us when they are ready again.'

'But the League of Nations would stop them,' I protested with all the fierce idealism of youth.

'Ah yes,' he smiled indulgently, 'the League. I forgot. No, make no mistake about it, son; not even that clever Yankee invention will help us then. Nor your dollars and men, I'm afraid.'

'That's true enough,' I agreed. 'We won't be so easily dragged in again. This "winning the war" has turned out to be a pretty expensive party for us.'

'Oh?' he inquired. 'So it was America who won the war, eh?'

That's most interesting. I've often wondered where the credit belonged, really.'

It was an old trap into which I had fallen before. Now I stepped cautiously around it, and then decided to grab the bait out of curiosity concerning the man himself.

'Well,' I gazed innocently at the rack above his head, 'if we didn't win the war, who did?'

When, after a short silence, I lowered my eyes, it was to observe the tall Englishman looking at me puzzledly, as if trying to determine my seriousness. Then his deeply lined face softened with an oddly tragic humor as he turned to the square package at his side.

'Do you really want to know?' he asked quietly, at length.

'Of course,' I replied. 'I imagine your guess would be better than mine.'

'I'm not guessing at all.' He looked up quickly. 'I did. I won the war.'

There followed a rather embarrassing pause. Obviously the fellow was a megalomaniac, I hoped of the harmless variety. 'Oh, so *you're* the man?' I smiled. 'Well, my congratulations.'

He waved my words aside. 'You're thinking I'm quite mad, I dare say.' He watched me with narrowed eyes, leaning forward slightly in his seat.

'Oh, not at all,' I insisted, now definitely alarmed at the serious intensity in his wide gray eyes.

'It doesn't matter.' He sat back, observing the distant lights of Aachen slide past us in the dark. 'Only one man ever really believed me, anyway. Poor devil, I only wish he might have doubted it, too.'

'But you misunderstand,' I replied. 'I haven't said that I doubted you. I should like very much indeed to hear about it.'

He turned his head slowly and for a long while looked at me, through me, his eyes drilling down into the years.

'Well, why not?' he asked himself aloud. 'It would be rather appropriate just now, and after tomorrow's job I dare say I shan't ever feel like telling it again.'

At this moment the conductor, a pompous little Prussian with gimlet moustaches, opened the door of our compartment, bowed, and informed us with gruff pride that our baggage would be inspected by the customs office in Brussels, as the Express did not

stop at the border. We should arrive in an hour and a quarter, he replied to the Englishman's question, and with another stiff bow he withdrew.

'Time enough,' my companion murmured; and then, 'My name is Roger Bradman.' I introduced myself. We shook hands.

II

'Of course you've never heard of me,' he began. 'Nor of the Bradman Spy Case, back in 1913. All that would be before your time.'

It was. But I had read of the famous case in Dr. Spingard's book. 'Wasn't that the incident that nearly caused war between Germany and England? Are *you* that Bradman?'

'Yes,' he nodded, 'I am. The Naval Intelligence had sent me to Berlin to get the plans of the Heligoland forts. Well, I got them — and then they got me. Stupid error, of course, but there I was, caught red-handed.

'Then the fun began. They didn't care particularly about shooting me. They would have, quickly enough, but we weren't at war. But the Kaiser jumped at the chance to pin a bit of incriminating evidence on Great Britain. They were all fairly certain that I was a British officer, but they couldn't prove it. We had taken care of that.

'All the same, my arrest created a terrific shindy. Every brass hat in the German army must have had a go at me, and all their newspapers were howling for my head. Oh, they put the fear of God into me, right enough; but finally, through some major miracle which I've never been able to figure out, they let me go.

'Naturally England had disowned me from the start. Never heard of me. Refused me permission to return and all that. You see it was the only way she could save her face — and my neck. It's the usual treatment when a spy is caught.

'So for a year I simply knocked about the Continent, avoiding my fellow countrymen. Once in every two months I received my expenses from one of the Queen's messengers. A cushy job for me, but a trifle wearing on the nerves.

'Then in August of '14, when the lid finally blew off, orders came through for me to return at once to London, and I was given com-

mand of the *Firedrake*, a scouting destroyer attached to Admiral Hood's battle force on North Sea patrol.'

At this point the Englishman paused and reached across for my newspaper, which he spread flat upon his knees. Then with a pencil he sketched a rough map of the Belgian coast, marking Ostende and Nieuport and the crooked course of the Yser River.

'Have a look at this,' he suggested. 'It may give you a clearer picture of what happened that night.

'As you remember,' he pointed with his pencil, 'Germany attacked France from three directions, southward through the Vosges, in the centre along the Marne, and a third army under von Kluck smashed through Belgium. Their plan was to converge upon Paris in a series of swift flanking movements. This would compel the French army to switch its centre of mobilization, and in attempting to re-form its lines the French might conceivably be thrown into such confusion and disorder that a gigantic victory, a Sedan on a colossal scale, might be won by the Germans. Paris could be taken later, at their leisure.

'And they came jolly near to doing it, too! You see, after grabbing Antwerp they pushed along to capture the coast towns, Dunkirk, Calais, and Boulogne. This would have cut off England's best line of communication and also turned the Allied flank. That would have finished the war then and there.

'Meanwhile, they had shoved the little Belgian army almost into the Channel. Retreating day after day, hammered to pieces by the heavy guns, unable to care for their dead and wounded, the Belgians were at the frayed end of their rope. They were praying for the British to come to their rescue, but Haig was having his own trouble on their right.

'On the night of the twenty-eighth of October the two armies were within half a mile of each other, with the Belgian left flank ending in the sand dunes of the North Sea at a point a mile below Nieuport. The men were completely done in, standing asleep in their trenches. The Yser, which flowed behind the lines, had swollen with the fall rains until the whole Flanders plain was a waste of bottomless mud.

'As you can readily see, it was a hopeless situation. King Albert knew that the Germans would attack again at daybreak, though they too were worn out from the long chase across Belgium and had

outdistanced their supply trains. Albert knew with grim certainty that his exhausted forces would never be able to withstand the attack.

'Shortly before midnight on the twenty-eighth, the Belgian King ordered a council of his staff. When the men gathered they could scarcely bring themselves to look into each other's eyes. None of them believed there was any possible way out. They knew, too, that it would mean the certain end of the war when the Germans broke through, for there would be nothing between them and Paris. If the French dropped back to cover their flank the Crown Prince and von Hindenburg would smash through, throwing the Allied forces into a complete rout.

'The Belgian officers discussed this problem from every conceivable angle, but could find no satisfactory solution. Finally a Colonel of Dragoons offered this last desperate suggestion.

'He proposed that they send a small patrol of picked men down to the beach on their extreme left; attempt there to overcome the German sentries and then to signal to sea, in hopes that some part of the British fleet, cruising in the darkness, would spot the signals and come to their rescue, either by landing men or else by drawing within range so that their heavy guns might bombard the German lines.

'This suggestion was immediately accepted as a last resort, but with little real hope of its success.

'Eight men, including two officers, were chosen for the expedition. They traversed the shallow trench until it became lost in the sand dunes, and from there they crept eastward toward the enemy lines, ready with their bayonets for what they hoped would be a short and silent action. The night was pitch-black, with a low storm-sky blotting out the stars. The Belgians were afraid of passing the sentries in the dark, so they spread out to ten-yard intervals and moved slowly up the beach.'

III

Here Bradman paused again, this time to pick up the square box resting beside him on the seat. His large powerful fist closed over it until the veins stood out like earthworms in contrast to the bloodless knuckles.

'They found the sentry?' I prompted eagerly.

'Yes, they found him,' Bradman continued grimly, '*asleep!* A boy of twenty or so, haggard with weariness, seated on a driftwood log, his rifle clutched between his knees. He had taken off his boots to bury his aching feet in the cool sand, and his trousers were rolled up above his knees.

'One of the officers slugged him with the butt of a revolver. They tied him up with belts and carried him into the dunes, after leaving his spiked helmet with one of their men who stayed at the post and later captured the relief sentry.

'Then the Belgians searched about until they discovered a spot shielded from sight of the German lines by high sandhills. Here they started a fire with driftwood and oil. After they had it blazing well they threw handfuls of gunpowder upon it at half-minute intervals, making a sort of recurrent-flare beacon.

'Now this,' Bradman hesitated and smiled, 'is where I enter the story.

'That night of the twenty-eighth the *Firedrake* and the *Myrmidon* were passing up the Belgian coast on our way to join the main fleet. Following Beatty's show in the Bight there was the expectation of a general action in the air, and we were bringing up extra shells, torpedoes, and a few cases of Scotch whiskey. That is, we *thought* it was Scotch whiskey when we loaded the crates at Plymouth. The boxes were labeled "Cameron Highlander," the name of a popular brand. But on our first night out one of my men, in checking the stores, discovered that the cases in fact contained uniforms intended for the regiment of 1st Cameron Highlanders, somewhere in France! There were a hundred and eighty complete uniforms, kilts, Glengarries, and all. Oh, there were hundreds of mistakes more ridiculous than that made in those days, and we considered it lucky that the matter was more humorous than tragic.

'I was on the bridge at about one in the morning of the twenty-ninth when one of our lookouts spotted the fire on shore. I watched the flares for a long while through my night glasses, but as they were not in code I could make neither head nor tail of them. There were no lighthouses along this stretch of coast, nor any town. We thought we knew the approximate extent of the German advance, but none of us believed they had pushed this far.

'Now we had orders to offer any possible assistance to the land

forces, but this was supposed to mean only that our monitors such as the *Mersey* and the *Severn* might be called upon. Such private investigations as this were, of course, strictly forbidden. Nevertheless, I found myself developing a most persistent curiosity about this light where no light should be. Call it a hunch if you like. At any rate I ordered the ship dropped to half speed and swung in closer. I watched the flares again, but again could deduce nothing. One thing was obvious, however: *someone* was signaling to sea.

'I ordered the *Myrmidon* to continue at reduced speed along her course, and said that we would pick her up again toward daybreak. Then I dropped anchor, lowered a small launch, and together with a dozen sailors, all of us heavily armed, landed on the coast at a point less than a mile below the light. You see, for all I knew this signal might very well have been a ruse of the Germans, and my suspicions were becoming greater by the minute.

'We advanced cautiously up the beach until we were within a hundred yards of the fire. Here I split our force and we closed in upon them from three sides. At thirty yards or so I was able to make out the Belgian uniforms and challenged them in French.

'*Jove!* You've never seen such amazement on any men's faces in your life! When they saw us walk into the circle of firelight they rushed forward like so many lost children and threw their arms about us, weeping for joy.

'It must have been fully five minutes before any of them was able to talk coherently, or slowly enough for me to understand. Over and over they kept repeating *men, guns*, and pointed out to sea. Finally I pulled one of the officers aside and learned something of their desperate situation. In the light from my hand torch the fellow knelt upon the sand and sketched the battle lines. He made clear the strategic position of the enemy, waiting for morning to push through the thin Belgian line. Then he drew a small circle below and to the left. "Paris," he said simply, and looked up at me.

'I explained to him that British destroyers of the *Firedrake* class carried a crew of only a hundred men, and that our light guns hadn't the range necessary for offshore bombardment.

'At this bad news the Belgian major fell silent. He stared at me almost reproachfully for a second and then spoke quietly to his men. Exactly what he said I do not know, for he spoke in Flemish, but I could fairly well guess.

'I looked away, I dare say to avoid the anguish in the poor chap's eyes, and saw the German sentry lying crumpled on the sand. He had recovered consciousness, but they had gagged him with a muddy puttee and his eyes rolled up at the light as wide with fear and pain as those of a child who has been stuck in a dark closet. In fact he looked very much like a little boy, with his trousers rolled up and his bare legs stretched out on the sand.

'I stared at his knees for a moment, trying to remember something, and then suddenly I recalled the eight cases of Cameron Highlander uniforms in the hold of the *Firedrake*! Why not turn them over to the Belgians? A company dressed in the bright Scottish kilts, by risking to display themselves in the early morning light, might alarm the battle-weary troops of von Kluck into thinking that the British had rushed up a picked division in support of the Belgians. It was a long chance, a psychological trick, that might possibly work. Also I could spare them a crate or two of Lewis guns. It was a terrifically long shot at best, but we were in no position to weigh the odds, and we should have to work fast.

'I rushed back to the major and described my plan. He listened dully at first, like a man in whom all hope is dead, but his head lifted slowly as I talked, and before I had finished he leapt to his feet, clutched my arm and cried: "Yes, yes! It might work. It is at least *something*!"

"Then bring up several ambulances or ammunition trucks," I directed, "as close to the beach as you can get. We can carry the crates to them across the sand."

'The Belgian major called to the younger officer, described the plan in a staccato sentence, and sent him hurrying back to their lines with four of the men. Then he ran back with us to the launch, wading into the surf with the sailors to shove us off. I left him my torch to guide us in landing.

'Back on the ship, I roused out the entire crew to give a hand with the crates of uniforms. We lowered two lifeboats and roped them in tandem behind the launch. Then we ferried the boxes ashore, the whole lot of them. Meanwhile the Belgians had detailed two companies to meet us at the beach and change uniforms there in order to save time. We broke open the crates with bayonets and assembled the complete uniforms in orderly piles on the sand. It was a sight I shall never forget — a hundred and eighty men

changing their clothes around that fire, laughing at the bright red and yellow kilts and putting on the caps backwards so that the ribbons fell over their gray, muddled faces. We assembled the Lewis guns and piled them into a truck.

'The job was finished just about an hour before dawn. We put out the fire, tossed the two German sentries into an ambulance, and waited until the last kilted figure had disappeared into the dunes. Then we hurried back to the *Firedrake*, hauled the boats aboard, and headed out to sea just as the first faint streaks of morning appeared in the east.

'It had been a damned close thing,' Bradman mused, rubbing the bowl of his briar against his nose. 'Too close for comfort. It's a tricky piece of coast there off Nieuport, all sand bars and cross-currents. Besides, the tide had gone out on us, and before we cleared the last shoals we heard the first German guns beginning their barrage. The final day of the first battle of Flanders had begun —'

'When they stopped them by opening the dikes of the Yser.' I recalled after so many years a headline which had once inflamed a boy's mind.

The Englishman nodded. 'That's how they have put it into the history books, no doubt. But it was really the kilts that did it — they and a few machine guns.

'The Belgian machine-gunners piled the enemy three-deep as they came across the marshes. Thousands were drowned in the rivers and canals. Next to Verdun and Gallipoli, it was probably the ghastliest slaughter of the war. All day it went on like that, with wave after wave of the enemy melting away, the men dropping out of sight beneath the water as they fell. Once or twice the gunners held their fire until the Germans were near enough to see the British uniforms.

'By late afternoon the marshes were literally paved with dead, and still the enemy floundered in their company-front formations. But the heart had gone out of the attack when they saw that they were confronted by what they believed to be fresh troops in the uniforms of a crack Scottish regiment. At last, just before dark, the Belgians opened the lower dikes of the Yser, and the battle was over. From that hour until the end of the war the Germans never came a foot farther through Flanders, and the Allies' left flank was saved.'

IV

Bradman smiled and spread his hands palms upward upon his knees as if the story had ended.

'But Good Lord, man,' I exclaimed, 'go on!'

He shrugged and looked away. 'What more is there to tell? I never knew the outcome of it myself until many years later. Then it was too late.'

'How do you mean — too late?'

'When I reported to the fleet with the crates missing there was the devil to pay. The mistake about loading uniforms was put down as a deliberate scheme on my part. The Admiral's staff thought I had turned the stuff over to the Germans. They clapped me in irons and sent me back to England under arrest for treason. Even the sailors who had landed with me on the beach admitted at my court-martial at Hull that the men to whom we had given the Scottish uniforms might possibly have been Germans. A telegram was sent off to the Belgian Headquarters, but for some reason in the confusion there was never any answer. This was proof enough for my judges; and while they could actually prove nothing, neither could I. They stripped me of my command and rank and handed me over to a prison camp for the duration of the war.'

'You never told anyone about this?' I asked, incredulously. 'No one ever knew?'

'Yes, there *was* someone else who knew,' he replied. 'One man, the only man who ever believed me,' — and the friendly smile crept back into his eyes — 'unless *you* do.'

Bradman turned back a cuff to glance at his watch, and then peered out at the fog-dimmed lights of a town. The Express clattered over the points of a siding and passed the station at unchecked speed, the lights soon dropping away in the distance.

'I don't know why I should care a tinker's damn whether you believe me or not,' he remarked, 'but I do, oddly enough. Perhaps you have wondered why I fasten on you, an absolute stranger, to tell this to, but you may find some explanation in the end of my story. I say, how much time have we left?'

'That was Louvain we just passed,' I replied. 'We've a good quarter hour yet.'

'At any rate I shan't be long,' he continued, slipping the cord which bound the square package in his lap.

'After the Armistice I had to get out of England. I changed my name and crossed over to Canada. But my story, or rather *their* story about me, somehow always caught up with me. Ottawa, Vancouver, Melbourne, Freemantle, even far back in the Australian bush country, sooner or later some ex-navy man would turn up who recognized me and I would have to move on.

'Then three years ago, when I was returning to Europe on a freighter from Matadi, it suddenly occurred to me, while we were passing that same bit of coast where I had taken the *Firedrake*, that it had been just ten years ago, almost to the day, since my expensive little party on the beach. I can't explain it, but I had a feeling of overpowering curiosity to go back there and see the place again. "The criminal returning to the scene of his crime," I dare say. Whatever it was, I went.

'We docked at Antwerp on the morning of the twenty-ninth and by evening I was in Nieuport. I put up at the village hotel, where there was but one other guest, a quiet German, a bit younger than myself. His name was Bechtel — Gunnar Bechtel. We met at dinner, the proprietor of the hotel, his wife, Bechtel, and I sitting all together at the same table.

'We were a long time over the meal and it must have been close to midnight before the proprietor and his wife left for bed. Bechtel and I sat on for a while to finish the wine. Then he arose, bowed his apologies, and withdrew — also, as I imagined, to bed.

'I finished my pipe, then wandered out into the hall, unlatched the front door, and strolled along the cobbled streets toward the sea. There was enough of a moon to guide me through the dunes and soon I was on the beach. I faced west, remembering how the village had been above us to the east on that other night, and walked slowly along the hard sand, thinking of all that had happened in the years since.

'Suddenly from the corner of my eye I caught sight of a man seated upon a log. It gave me quite a start. Just as I was about to walk on, my eyes still guardedly upon him, I recognized that it was Bechtel, my fellow lodger at the hotel. I laughed and called out to him in relief.

'We sat there for quite a time, smoking and talking, and finally he asked me in his politely abrupt way what might have brought me to Nieuport in October.

'I told him this story, exactly as I have told it to you. I remember when I had finished I felt a bit embarrassed, as if I had talked too much; so I wound up by saying half jokingly, "So you see, Herr Bechtel, I am the original man who won the war," and then stood up to go.

'The German rose too, and laid his hand gently on my arm. "Do you know who I am, my friend?" he asked me quietly.

'I shook my head.

"I am the man who *lost* the war," he replied, looking me squarely in the eyes. "*I am the sentry they found asleep.*"

'It was true. Bechtel was the lad they had caught napping that night, whose bare muddy knees had given me the idea of the kilts.

'For ten years his "sin," as he called it, had been gnawing at his conscience, driving him nearly mad; and he had hoped in his simple peasant way that by returning to the scene of his disgrace he might conquer the feeling. Since the end of the war he had watched all the horrors of revolution, the starvation of his people, the acres of war dead, the millions of widows and orphans, and he had seen all these things as *his* monstrous crime against the Fatherland. For Bechtel knew clearly, just as I knew, that if only he had been awake that night the battle of Flanders would have been quite another story, and the German army would unquestionably have been in Paris by Christmas.

'We stood there on that strip of sand in the moonlight, looking at each other, "the man who won the war" and "the man who lost it." There was nothing to say, nothing at all. We turned and walked slowly back along the beach, I suppose the two loneliest men on earth. . . .'

The Englishman spoke in a voice scarcely above a whisper, as a man talks to himself. His eyes returned from the window to the square box and an expression of infinite weariness settled over his features.

In the early morning the Waterloo Road was dark but for the lanterns swinging at the crossings, dim and misty in the rain; and the squat black barges of the Willebroeck Canal were huddled like beetles for comfort from the cold. Far away the lights of Brussels flickered through a leafless grove.

'Where is he now? Have you seen him since?' I asked, moved by curiosity as well as by a desire to say something kind.

'No,' replied Bradman. 'I never saw him afterwards. Once each year we wrote. He worked in an iron foundry near Dortmund. A week ago he wrote to me from a hospital there, saying that there was something he wanted me to do for him. *There'll be a little dirt in a box*, he wrote, and he asked me to bury it for him on the beach near Nieuport.

'That is where I am going now,' said Bradman, 'and this is the box.'

Tenderly he removed the brown paper from the package on his knees, disclosing a small stone urn. He held it so that I might read the simple inscription: GUNNAR BECHTEL.

THE LAST EQUATION¹

By ROGER BURLINGAME

(From *Story*)

NOW that he was sick there was no more responsibility. His job was only to lie there and they would take care of him impersonally, except Megs. The office, Spelman, the men standing at the tables in the drafting room, Miss Kraus, they would all have to get along without him; they were independent of him; now they must call up the hospital until a voice divorced from flesh and warmth answered, 'Mr. Drake is resting quietly.' So, he was a negative unit in his own scheme: they were glad, in a way, for this interval in which he remained minus. Except Megs.

Stephen closed his eyes and hoped that Megs would not come for a while.

But God, these nurses! How can a human being face another human being so mechanistically? I am a man, they are women, isn't it so? Or is it not so? Can they take that off with their street clothes? No, for Miss Thwing, sitting impassive over there by the window with only half of her showing in the light . . . Miss Thwing must once, twice, sometimes in this silence, reach out to that world beyond the hook she has hung herself on, to someone who does not call her Miss Thwing — a beat must then be skipped by the heart below her starched armor. Yes, occasionally Miss Thwing reaches out.

Miss Thwing has a face, neck, shoulders, hands, feet, and probably lungs, heart, stomach, etc., inside. She must want, once in a while to stretch, belch or scratch herself in the middle of her back but she will not do these things lest I become aware that she is a poor weak human creature. I might even believe that she is a woman. The ultimate breakdown would come if she, in turn, knew then, that I was a man instead of a machine out of order. Still, she must know, secretly, from the frequent evidence I have given her.

Thank God the pain was better.

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Stephen sighed and Miss Thwing got up.

'Easier?' she said.

'Yes, easier.'

On the whole, it was good, this hanging yourself on a hook. Stephen hoped suddenly that he would never, never, see Miss Thwing with herself on. It would torture him to have her care whether he was worse or better and now he thought uncomfortably about Megs.

'Better, Stephen? A little better, dear?'

Her thin face would draw together and be thinner when she said that. Why was her face so thin, so damn thin! A thousand times she must have said that: 'Better Stephen?' the last three days with her familiar thin face close to him. Why did she love him so? She was so sweet, so good, so worried, so utterly unselfish, yet when he looked at her his nerves were acutely conscious of a tooth sticking out further than the others, that her ears lay back too close to her head, that she squinted when she pronounced certain words, that there was one square fleck and one triangular fleck in her right eye.

'I love you, Megs.'

But, of course, he must love her; he loved something deep in her beneath these things. Beneath her 'Really, Stephen?' when he had made a tremendous joke, beneath her lifting his highball glass from the polished table and wiping it off, beneath the slow, methodical way she picked his clothes off the floor and hung them. Beneath these things, there was something he loved. What?

Well, he was married to Megs. Marriage was an event, 'way back now in the past — a youth when events were important in themselves — events for events' sake. Little china Megs, pale, golden, bric-a-brac Megs, too exquisite to believe and she loved him. Dainty, dainty Megs. A woman? He had quivered with surprise at someone using that word about Megs.

She loved him so much that she submitted that porcelain body to the robustness of marriage. Stephen would never forget how she lay, waiting, that first time, as she might lie, waiting for an operation, heroic, smiling: Yes, kill me, it is for a cause, I love you enough for that. But, child, this is life, not death, love is not negation!

And, always after, too, it was like that — the body ready for

the sacrifice. Never, never: Stephen, I am tired tonight; never: Let's sleep Stephen, I love you just the same. No tears.

So a month after the event, Stephen knew it had been a capture. In the first year he learned that the porcelain shepherdess was reinforced by a thin, inflexible steel rod.

Along came the children, dutifully. In her womb, by will, she made them after her pattern, diverted them from him. She made their pale hair, their flecked eyes, their transparent skins, their delicate indestructible hands. Not a toe or a knuckle of Steve's and Margaret's was his. But why?

'Miss Thwing, I'd like some orange juice.'

'We cannot start intestinal activity, Mr. Drake, before ——'

'Nonsense, Miss Thwing!'

'I'm sorry, Mr. Drake. Your intestines must be empty.'

Yet it had seemed inevitable, ordered, chemical, this capture. Certainly Megs had no affinity for his body, but for his essence, perhaps. Well, then, why did his essence not respond? If you put sodium and hydrochloric acid together there is immediate reaction, the sodium is as eager as the acid to form the salt. The atoms fly together to form the new molecules (or did when he went to school) and they fly with equal avidity whether they are sodium or chlorine. The hydrogen gets left out, there is a crowd, poor hydrogen, but it will find its oxygen soon and come down in sweet, warm rain.

A magnet, however, does not move; the iron filings fly to it because it is larger and stronger than they. Some scientists say the magnet does move; they had to work hard to get that... Everything moves in an arc....

I love you, Megs.

Well, the habit of marriage is strong. I have never, never been unfaithful to you — hardly, even, in thought. I have looked at other women passing by, been stirred by the sweet curves of their legs, enjoyed occasional, very occasional movies and burlesque shows. But I have not dwelt upon these things.

'Miss Thwing.'

'Yes.'

Under the starch, Miss Thwing, you have a remarkable body. It is warm and satisfying.

'Miss Thwing, please get me a newspaper.'

'You're not supposed to read, Mr. Drake.'

'Why?'

'Because you're not supposed to get excited.'

'I can read the paper without getting excited. I'll get more excited if I don't.'

'No, no, Mr. Drake you must relax.'

Relax! Does she know what thinking is? Trying to work it out? The more my body relaxes, the more my mind works. Hunger, tiredness from pain, make it run faster. I must think. No more about Megs except where Megs is chemistry. Perhaps I will die on the operating table: I must think first, think clean and sharp like a knife.

'Miss Thwing.'

'Yes.'

'Miss Thwing, will you please go away?'

Miss Thwing came to the side of the bed and stood looking down at Stephen.

'No, I'm not feverish, Miss Thwing. Here, feel my forehead. You have fine hands. Now here it is, I can relax if I am quite alone. I believe I can sleep. Do you mind? Usually I like to have you there, I like you very much, Miss Thwing, but now...'

She moved the pillows a little, then glided away. Stephen thought she moved purposefully not as if she were going away but as if she were going *somewhere*. God help me if she brings a doctor to see if I am delirious. The door closed slowly against its pneumatic stop.

Now.

The world is full of men and women like me and Megs. It is also full of birds, wolves, woodchucks, trees and grass. One scheme moves chemically, biologically according to a pattern: the other is disordered. Mind has come in there. Now God, we'll say, orders the first scheme: the second he cannot cope with. So mind must be anti-God. That makes two conflicting forces, God and anti-God and the universe is a battle.

Stephen slipped through the circumference of a sphere and now he was in larger, fresher space. It was like slipping through the film of a soap bubble without breaking it.

Now he remembered sharply the drafting room at the office. All day the men stood at their boards in brilliant light making lines which would become houses that would stand up and bear weight on

their floors, keep out wet and cold. All day, these men allied their minds with the natural laws: gravity, stress and strain, the mechanical principle of the lever. But at night when they left the drafting room, now close and smelling of their effort, they went home and bucked the natural laws all night. They went home to tight cliff dwellings, fought with their wives, begot undesired and undesirable children or thought miserably or drank.

Joe Beers was a boy and had no wife but he had girls, a string of girls, who fatigued him. Soon there would be nothing left for Joe. Ham Willink found the pressure of his mind intolerable and got drunk to quiet or divert it. Carstairs made futuristic drawings which triumphantly denied his work of the day.

Yet the work these men did kept a part of humanity going.

Now God was the architect for the animals but man fought Him and considered His plans inadequate, uncomfortable and, probably, in bad taste. But all the same, man could not build except by God's laws if, indeed, they were His. The scientists, to be sure, were constantly finding them wrong.

Who is God? Why did he equip man with a vermiform appendix? To try and thwart His enemy, Mind? But Mind had licked the vermiform appendix — that is if you could say you beat a thing by removing it.

Stephen passed into another sphere and observed the stars. Colossal but inanimate. Or, at least, unconscious. Yet here he was in a realm of great activity. The order and business of the animals was nothing to this high-powered organization. Light and energy in the ether, movement and relation motivated and held in check by suns, particles flying off without reducing the bulk of the matter, chemical combination on a large, electric, scale.

Was this superior to mind? No, because mind was conscious of it and it was not conscious of mind. I — or rather Mr. Jeans, say — observe these things, reflect upon them, find their causes. You can weigh a star, Mr. Jeans, weighing so many million times as much as the earth as easily as you can weigh your baby — easier: the star does not squirm or *rebel against being weighed*.

Could Mind destroy the stars? Will it survive them?

Mind, yes: it created them. Not human mind but Mind. Ah, now we are getting somewhere! But what is human mind — a reflection? A particle that is shot off? There, now, I've got it . . . Ah!

The door moved open, men with white coats and the head nurse came in.

'Well, Mr. Drake!'

It was so good just to lie and think.

'Have I got to go now?'

'It's nothing, Mr. Drake. It's very, very easy.'

'It seems hard.'

'We do twenty a day, Mr. Drake.'

'Oh that...'

He must be like a feather, they lifted him so easily. Queer to be rolling along feet first. Rubber tires. Balloon...

'Ha!' Stephen laughed suddenly.

'All right, Mr. Drake?'

Megs hadn't come! She'd missed it.

When the cone was over his head he breathed deep as they told him; his ears hummed. One, two, three; one *and* two *and* three *and*; one, seven, eleven: symbolic — but always starting with One.

Now he was off through the spheres, not slowly, with labor as before but easily and fast. He recognized them as he went: it was like going in a car over a road you had walked as a child. But he went beyond now, beyond the limits.

So, stop, he was in a room. Men talked and laughed about a long table, moving about, sitting down, getting up, joking in unintelligible language.

'Alpha?'

'To the W minus one.'

'Why?'

'Because of epsilon.'

'That's diminished by regression.'

Stephen sat at an end of the table. Beyond the other end and the men, stretched an unlimited blackboard. Now someone put his hand on Stephen's shoulder and leaned over him. He saw a genial face, dark, smoothshaven, but with eyes almost luminous.

'Now,' said this person, 'what's the trouble?'

'You *know*, don't you?'

'I can explain it to you, I'm sure. It's absurdly simple.'

'You're God, aren't you?'

'No indeed. I'm one of the teachers.'

'You're not Christ, that I'm sure.'

'No, Stephen, Christ would not help you now. You're not quite up to that. Your thought is very elementary. Christ helps the more advanced pupils like . . . well like your Grandfather Barnes.'

'Grandpa could only just read and write.'

The person turned away, put his hands in his trousers pockets and faced the blackboard. Now Stephen could see the whole of him: he was short and stocky — his hair was thick and in great disorder.

'Can't we have a higher vibration?' he said.

The light in the room changed from yellow to blue to violet.

'Now look,' said Stephen's teacher. 'Follow me carefully and don't interrupt. Don't ask me where I get my premises. It will all be clear to you when I'm through. Now: $x + y = 0$. Let me write it down.'

He went to the blackboard. The men drew aside, the table seemed to disappear.

'Let's go on from there.'

Stephen did not recognize the forms of the equations but he grasped their solutions. The teacher covered the whole blackboard with his symbols. Stephen's excitement rose as he watched: he had never felt such excitement. He could hardly wait for the teacher to write for his eagerness to see these equations resolve. Now they were melting into each other, he could guess the solution before it was written.

The spheres were all there: Megs, the animals, the architects, the stars.

'Now,' said the teacher. 'Here is radio activity. We're not far now. See this?'

He pounded with his chalk on the board, the dust of the chalk was luminous.

'Now take the kappa root of this.'

Stephen cried out.

'There is no kappa root! There's no such thing!'

'Oh, isn't there?' shouted the teacher. 'How about this?'

'Don't!' cried Stephen. 'Don't, I can't bear it! I see, I see, but stop there for God's sake!'

'Go talk to him, one of you,' said the teacher.

A gentle, bearded man came over to Stephen's left side.

'Don't be afraid,' he said. 'You have every right to know.'

They've been talking nonsense to you where you live. This is so simple. Now look . . .'

Now Stephen heard the man at the other end whispering and laughing together as pleasantly as if they had just got up from a good stag dinner. So he took his hands away from his eyes and looked back at the blackboard.

'There,' said the teacher. 'There's the kappa root. Now divide it by the differential . . .'

'The differential of beta!' said Stephen and his voice echoed over the skies where the ceiling of the room had been, but then he put his face in his hands and sobbed a long time because the joy overwhelmed him.

'Now,' said the bearded man beside him. 'It will be good for you to face it.'

So Stephen looked up and saw the final equation glowing in a new color across the sky where the blackboard had been and he understood quietly.

'So X equals . . .' he said.

'Yes,' said the teacher. 'So it was silly for you to think I was God.'

And there it was, still, gigantic, written in light, the last equation. The men all gathered behind Stephen to look at it; the talk and the laughter drew down, the silence was infinite.

When he had fallen back through the spheres and stopped in dark confinement, Stephen could still see the letters: then they moved, turned upside down and faded. He opened his eyes.

'It's gone,' he said.

A laugh rang out.

'Yup, gone forever!'

Then a thin familiar voice.

'Oh, doctor, he's coming out.'

Stephen closed his eyes trying, trying to go back. It was no good. He could feel the thin face over him, bending close.

'Better, Stephen? Oh, say it's better.'

'Yes,' said Stephen. 'I love you, Megs.'

THE VOYAGE OUT^{*}

By MORLEY CALLAGHAN

(From *The New Yorker*)

JEFF found himself sitting next to her one night in a movie, and when he discovered that she was neat and pretty, he began to watch her furtively. Though she didn't even turn her head, he felt sure she was aware of him beside her. When she got up to go, he followed her out, and as she hesitated at the theatre entrance, drawing on her gloves, he began a polite, timid conversation. Then they walked along the street together.

He soon found out that her name was Jessie, and that she worked in a millinery store and lived with her father and mother. Until that night a month later when they were standing in the hall of her apartment house, saying good night in the way they had so often done in the last weeks, he hadn't thought he had much chance of making love to her. They were standing close together, laughing and whispering. Then she stopped laughing and was quiet, as though the shyness which was hidden underneath her warm, affectionate ways was troubling her. She suddenly put her arms tight around him, lifted up her face, held him as if she would never let him go, and let him know she was offering all her love.

'I don't want to go home. Let me go in with you and stay a while,' he pleaded.

'All right — if they're asleep,' she whispered.

As they opened the door and tiptoed into her place, the boldness he felt in her made his heart beat loud. Then they heard her father cough. They stood still, frightened, her hand tightening on his arm.

'We'd better not tonight,' she whispered. 'They're awake. You'd better go quick.'

'Tomorrow night then?'

'Maybe — we'll see,' she said.

Brushing her face nervously against his, she almost shoved him out into the street.

As he loafed over to Eighth Avenue, his nervousness left him. He

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was full of elation, and he thought, 'Gee whizz, she'll do anything I want now. It came so easy, just like I wanted it to,' and a longing for her began to grow in him. He still could feel her warmth and hear her urgent whispering. He grinned as he loafed along, for he had thought it would take a long time and he'd have to go slow and easy. Lights in the stores, the underground rumble, and the noise of the crosstown buses on Twenty-Third Street seemed to be touched and made important by the marvellous tenderness within him. He wanted suddenly to lean against a bar or sit at a counter, hear men's laughter, and feel his own triumphant importance among them, and he hurried into the restaurant where he had a cup of coffee every night after leaving her.

At this time men from a bakery in the block came in for a lunch and a smoke, and Jeff, who had got to know some of them, sat at the counter and ordered a cup of coffee and looked around to see who else was in the restaurant. There were two decently dressed girls, sitting at a table talking quietly. When Jeff smiled at the girls without any shyness, because a warm feeling for everyone and everything was in him, they shrugged their shoulders in surprise and laughed at each other.

Then the men from the bakery, with the strong, sweet smell of freshly baked bread on them, and their pants white with flour, came in and sat in a row at the counter and began to order plates of hot food.

Sitting next to Jeff was a big, powerful fair-haired fellow wearing a little flour-marked cap. The others called him Mike, and Jeff had often seen him in the restaurant. Having finished his plate and wiped his mouth, he winked at Jeff and said, 'Hello, kid. You around here again tonight? What's new?'

'Nothing,' Jeff said. 'I've just been feeling pretty good.' But he looked so happy as he grinned that Mike puckered up his eyes and appraised him thoughtfully, and the two girls at the table were watching him, too. To seem nonchalant, Jeff whispered to Mike, as he indicated the girls with a nod of his head, 'How do you like the look of the blonde baby in the green hat?'

'That one?' Mike said as he turned on his stool and looked at the girls, who were whispering with their heads close together. 'That one, son? She's a cinch. Didn't you see the glad eye she was giving you? She's a soft touch. She'd give you no trouble at all.'

'She don't look like that to me,' Jeff said.

'I guess I can put my finger on them by this time. If you couldn't go to town with her in two weeks, you ought to quit,' Mike said. Then, as if ashamed to be arguing about women with a kid who was so much younger, he added, 'Anyway, she's too old for you. Lay off her.'

But Jeff kept shifting around on the stool, trying to catch a sudden glimpse of the girl in the green hat, so he could see her as Mike had seen her, yet knowing that to him she still looked quiet and respectable and good-natured. When she smiled suddenly, she seemed like any other friendly girl — a little like Jessie, even. 'Maybe Mike could have looked at Jessie and known from the start it would only take a month with her,' he thought. Feeling miserable, he kept staring at the girl, yearning to possess Mike's wisdom, and with a fierce longing growing in him to know about every intimate moment Jessie had had with the men who had tried to make love to her. 'If I had been sure of myself, I guess I could have knocked Jessie over the first night I took her out,' he went on thinking. The elation he had felt after leaving Jessie seemed childish, and he ached with disappointment.

The girls, who had become embarrassed by Jeff's sullen stare, got up and left the restaurant, and when they had gone Jeff said to Mike, 'I get what you mean about that baby in the green hat.'

'What did she do?' Mike asked.

'Nothing, nothing. It was just the way she swung her hips going out the door,' Jeff lied, and he lit a cigarette and paid his check and went out.

Jeff and his brother, who was a salesman out of work, had a small apartment on West Twenty-Second Street. As soon as Jeff got home, he realized that the sight of the food in the restaurant had made him hungry, and he went to the icebox and got a tomato, intending to cut some bread and make himself a sandwich. He was holding the tomato in his hand when there was the sound of someone rapping on the door.

It was his brother's girl, Eva, a tall, slim girl with fine brown eyes, who was only about two years older than Jeff. She often came to the apartment to see Jeff's brother. She was at home with Jeff, and laughed a lot with him, and never minded him having a cup of

coffee with them. But tonight she looked dreadfully frightened. Her eyes were red-rimmed and moist, as though she had been crying.

'Hello, Jeff. Is Bill home?' she asked.

'He ought to be home any minute, Eva. I thought he was with you.'

'He was, but he left me, and I thought he'd be here.'

'Why don't you sit down and wait for him?' Jeff said.

When she had been sitting down a little while and they were talking, Jeff found himself trying to look at her as Mike had looked at the girl in the green hat in the restaurant, looking at the way she held her head, at her legs, at her eyes with such a strange, shrewd glance that she became uneasy and began to smooth her skirt down over her legs.

'She knew what I was thinking,' Jeff thought, smiling and cynical, and he tried to say with his eyes, 'I know a lot more about you tonight than I used to know. I'll bet if I put my arms around you, you'd snuggle up against me.'

'What's the matter with you tonight?' Eva said uneasily.

Startled, Jeff said, 'Nothing. There's nothing the matter with me.'

'I guess I'm restless. I can't sit still. I think I'll be going,' she said, and with her face flushed, she got up and went out before he could think of anything to say that might keep her there.

When she had gone, Jeff, remembering the look of terror that had been in her eyes when she first came in, grew ashamed of the stupid, leering way he had looked at her. 'I've driven her away. Thinking of Mike made me act like a fool.' He hurried to the open window and looked down at the street, and he could see her pacing up and down, waiting.

He stayed at the window, watching, till he saw his brother coming along the street. Eva ran up to him, and they stopped under the light and began to talk earnestly. Then Bill took her by the arm very firmly and they started to walk toward the corner, but then they turned and came back and stood talking beneath the window.

In the murmur of their voices the words were indistinguishable, but Jeff knew, from the tone, that his brother was apologetic and fumbling. Then the voices rose a little and seemed to be lifted up to him, and there was a desperate pleading in the snatch of words, an eloquent sound Jeff had never heard in a girl's voice before. 'It's all

right. I wish you'd understand I'm not worrying and I'll never, never hold it against you.' She stopped suddenly and grabbed at Bill's arm. Then she let him go and hurried along the street, while Bill stood still, looking after her.

When Bill came in, Jeff said, 'Eva was in here waiting for you.'

Throwing his hat on a chair, Bill walked aimlessly toward the bedroom. 'I know she was here. I ran into her outside,' he said.

'What did she want?'

'Nothing important.'

'She was worked up about something, all right.'

'Why are you staring at me? What's the matter with me? What's the matter with you? Do I look funny?' Bill said.

In Bill's eyes there was the same scared expression that Jeff had seen on the face of Eva. He was accustomed to having his older brother dominate him, even bully him a little. Bill seemed years older than Jeff, because his hair had got so thin. And now the worry, the wonder, and fright showing in Bill's eyes made Jeff feel helpless.

'Eva thinks she's going away, but I'm not going to let her,' Bill said. 'I'm going to marry her even if we have to all live here together.'

'Doesn't she want to marry you?'

'She keeps saying it's her fault, and I didn't intend to marry her, and now she's put me in a hole at a time when we can't do anything about it. She wants to go away for a while till everything's all right.' Then Bill, looking straight ahead, said quietly, 'I don't know what I'd do if anything happened to Eva.'

Jeff could still see Eva clutching at his brother's arm on the street — but not in the way Jessie had clutched at his own arm — and he said hesitantly, 'I've got a girl of my own. I wouldn't want to get in the jam you're in.'

'Nobody does. There's no use talking about it,' Bill said, and he went into the bedroom and lay down on the bed.

Jeff knew that he was lying there quietly, fearing for Eva, loving her, and longing to protect her.

As Jeff watched his brother lying inert on the bed, he began to feel all his wretchedness and terror, and he himself grew timid. If he

went back to Jessie, it might get for them like it was for Bill and Eva now. Who wouldn't want to duck that?

He sat and pondered and worried about his brother for a long time. Then he knew suddenly that he was no longer even thinking of his brother; without noticing it, he had begun to dream of the way Jessie had held him against her, and he was thinking of them being together and whispering tomorrow night in her place when it was very late. He could see her lifting her ardent face up to him.

He got up restlessly, realizing that neither Mike's wisdom nor his brother's anguish could teach him anything tonight. Standing at the open window, he looked out over the lighted streets where he walked a little while ago, looking over toward Jessie's place, stirred with a longing for more and more of whatever she would be able to give him. It had started now for them and it would keep going on. And then he was filled with awe, for it seemed like the beginning of a voyage out, with not much he had learned on that night to guide him.

ENTER DAISY; TO HER, ALEXANDRA ¹

By CHARLES COOKE

(From *Story*)

AT HIGH noon on the day after the spectacularly successful New York première of 'Rise Above It!', Daisy Darling, outwardly composed, walked into the office of Manny Rosenblatt, the show's press agent. He greeted her with effusive servility, but her artificially long-lashed eyes looked past him, sweeping a veiled glance around the dusty room on the third floor of the Forty-First Street Theatre, where 'Rise Above It!' had opened the evening before; no one else was in the room, a fact which tuned a notch higher the inner tautness with which she had been living for the past month and which now, on the threshold of this meeting, was at its greatest tension.

'Well, where is everybody?' she said, dropping his pudgy hand, her bright Broadway voice underlining the vagueness of the last word. 'You said noon. It's noon, isn't it?'

'Be here any secon', Daisy,' he said, gallantly holding a chair for her.

'They better,' she said.

He sat down at his cluttered desk, plugged a cigar into his plausible and crafty face, and picked up a sheaf of newspaper clippings; the tip of a dapper green handkerchief peeped out of the breast pocket of his startling back-and-white-checked suit. His beady eyes darted glances at her peroxide, show-girl beauty: her too-blonde curls whorled smartly under her jaunty hat, her furs arched opulently over her shoulder, her suit was a rich tweed, her shoes alligator skin. Her brand-new, and well-earned, title of 'The World's Second Greatest Feminine Tap Dancer' gave her dignity that was increased by the sober expression on her frank, open, and elegantly gotten-up face; it was this expression, so different from her usual professional smile, that drew Manny's repeated glances.

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But she was so self-absorbed that she had already forgotten him; staring unseeingly at an alligator toe, holding a cigarette between crimson-tipped fingers, she was grimly thinking: 'Well, let her come. Let her *come!*' Manny was savoring with unreserved delight the heady elixir of unusual success that filled the room like ozone — the 'smash hit' feel, so rare on Broadway, so precious to Broadway people. She too was conscious of its pleasant tang, but her mood was much more complex, and tentative with alert waiting.

One window was open, admitting tart air from the sunny coolness of the multicolored October city. A yellowed ailanthus leaf on the sill, whirled there on an upward current from a scrawny metropolitan tree in the concrete areaway below, was a lone, potent symbol of autumn.

Keeping silent for any appreciable interval caused Manny almost physical pain and, despite her sulkiness, he began to talk. 'What you glum about, Daisy?' he said, in his usual tone of oily heartiness. 'You were great last night, *great!* You wowed 'em! Congratulations! And the critics this morning —' he looked down at the clippings in his hand, then up at heaven in rapture. 'Did you —'

'Of course I read 'em,' she said curtly. 'What do you think? And I know I was great last night — I don't need *you* to tell me that.'

He was beaming now, reassured by the beloved sound of his voice. He tapped the sheaf with a knowing finger. 'I broke into show business in 1909, when Irving Berlin's first song — before "Alexander's Ragtime Band," mind you — was just coming out. It was called "Dorando." A hit then, but nobody even remembers it now.' He began to sing softly, waving his cigar in time:

*It's no fun to lose da mon'
When da son of a gun no run.*

'It was about a marathon runner,' he said, with subdued ecstasy. She tapped her foot, not entertained. Fearful lest she might interrupt him, he hurriedly continued:

'John Drew, Louis Mann, Mrs. Fiske, Montgomery & Stone — those were the big names then.'

'So what?' said Daisy.

His smile was radiant. 'Point I want to make is: I never saw better notices — all around, I mean, for everybody — than "Rise Above It!" drew. Why, I toured America and Europe as advance man for Erlanger's original "Ben Hur" company, and I never —'

Yawning, she picked a program off the corner of his desk and, as though not intending to, flicked the pages to:

Billy Gordon presents
DIRK VAN STROOCK

in a new revue

RISE ABOVE IT!

with

Daisy Darling and Alexandra Shabelevska
An Arturo Delmoni Production

As his voice poured oilily on, she stared, fascinated, at her name. Her body still ached with the fatigue of the preceding evening's concert-pitch performance for the New York critics and a glittering New York first night audience, but the sight of her name there was a little shock of delight. It wasn't in capital letters, like Dirk Van Stroock's, but it was there: she was at last a Broadway star. Ten years it had taken, but she'd got there — she reviewed the familiar details of her most deeply-rooted emotional satisfaction, to keep her eyes and mind from straying to the hated name to the right of hers — she'd got there, and she had nobody to thank but herself.

Her life marched quickly through her brain as she stared down at the program, flicking cigarette ash on the carpet. Her childhood in Union City, N. J., daughter of Jim Daller, garage owner. Her school days, 'Dizzy Daisy,' always the life of the party, who danced better than any other girl in the city, who spent all her money on jazz records and played them for hours on a little phonograph in her room, stirred to the depths, her spine tingling and feet tapping as she listened to the sophisticated complexity of drum rhythms, the exciting blare of worldly trumpets, the syrupy sweetness of saxophone choirs. The magic gods of jazz, named on the records and pored over, but awe-compelling and unapproachable on their far, cloud-wrapped Olympus of Hot and Sweet: Duke Ellington, Paul Whiteman, Louis Armstrong, Noble Sissle, The Cotton Pickers. The flight to New York at eighteen, lining up with a hundred others at a Shubert 'call' for chorus girls, taken on though she could only Charleston. The chorine years, her name now Daisy Darling, years

that taught her the routine chorus steps and finally bored and discouraged her. The night she saw Bill Robinson dance at the Palace, and knew, amazed, that she felt rhythm the way he felt it and something happened in her soul and she began studying tap every morning, practicing hours and hours. The frightened day she searched out Bill himself and danced for him and wept for joy when she got back to the room she shared with Maizie because he had grinned and said 'You got what it takes, girlie!' and corrected her and showed her two new breakdowns and told her to come back. The extra bits out of the chorus line in the next show. The longer solo routine in the next. Always the practice, the practice, the practice. Then the unbelievable night, four months ago, when the brilliant young Delmoni saw her from out front (tipped off by Bill) and came backstage afterward and signed her up for the second lead in the new revue starring the great Dirk Van Stroock, which he was then casting.

She sighed: that was the high watermark. Her pure, undiluted delight in this real success, with its accompanying Hollywood offers and Central Park West duplex lasted only during the first four rehearsal weeks, then, just as she had perfected her marvelous new tap dance for the next to the last number, it had happened. And ever since, the sunshine of her satisfaction had been dappled with shadow and that curious tautness inside her had never relaxed. The affected, arty, stuffed-shirt hussy! And that name — enough to make a horse laugh. Out there wiggling her body, screwing up her face, running around in circles, jumping up and down — anybody could do that. But did she have any remote conception (*could* she have?) of the years of work, work, work that were necessary to raise a tap dancer to the top? Not to speak of the talent, the real talent, that had to go with it. And what was she? A foreigner — just a foreigner. Why didn't she go back where she came from?

Daisy frowned, threw her cigarette out the window. Only a minute had elapsed. 'Now you take the first reviews of "Chu Chin Chow" or "Chocolate Dandies,"' Manny was saying, self-hypnotized.

The elevator door clicked, down the hall, and Manny leaped up and rushed across the room just in time to bow and smirk as Alexandra Shabelevska entered. He did not introduce the two, assuming that of course they had met; as it happened, however, though the two saw each other backstage several times during every

performance and though each preoccupied the other's thoughts more than any other one person, they never had met, nor had they ever exchanged a single word. Their eyes flashed a momentary contact now — each waiting for the other to speak first — and the invisible electric arc that silently crackled across the sunny room penetrated even the tough hide of Manny's professional aplomb; their eyes parted, no word spoken, and Alexandra sat down languidly on the chair he had placed for her opposite Daisy.

'Congratulations, Alexandra,' he said feebly, sitting at his desk and picking up the sheaf of clippings again.

'Sank you,' she said, in a Slavic accent, setting Daisy's teeth on edge. She placed a long Russian cigarette in a long ivory holder and lighted it, leaning back in her chair, apparently absolutely self-possessed but as taut, inside, as Daisy. She wore a simple, loose, black dress, which emphasized, by half concealing, the sinuous, panther-like beauty of her skilled and intellectual body; a dull black Russian toque perched at a faintly impertinent angle on her head, harmonizing with the absolute black of her lush, tightly combed hair; scented smoke curled in wreaths before her alabaster face and its perfect Tartar features, its pursed carmine lips, its big black eyes, pensive but glinting with satisfaction that she had not arrived first.

Manny cleared his throat, looking from one to the other of the two stars. 'Boys'll be here any secon' now,' he said, glancing at his wrist watch, which stated three minutes after twelve, 'and we'll get the interview and picture in no time and you can both go — I know Arturo called a two o'clock rehearsal and you've neither of you had your lunch yet I suppose?'

There was a stony silence.

'I thought not,' he said jovially.

Suddenly a floodgate of ideas opened in his brain, a press agent's pride in a publicity *coup*. He rubbed his pudgy hands ecstatically, puffing with new vigor on his cigar, thrilled by the contemplation of his genius and (secondarily) by the aura of success in which they were all immersed, the certainty of a long, fat run.

'Front page of the *World-Tribune* tomorrow,' he chortled; 'parallel stories on both of you under a two-column photograph posed together! "THE DANCING STARS OF BILLY GORDON'S NEW REVUE" — that's to be the scarehead. Why, it's a press

agent's dream! The *front page* of the — by the Lord Harry, there hasn't been such a publicity wow since the midget sat on Morgan's knee! And if I do say it there's not a p.a. in this town but me could have closed it. I imagine Dirk won't exactly like it, he's so touchy anyway and he feels this is really his show, but it's too good a chance to pass by. And Golly knows you rate it — your work is sensational ... sensational ... I'll talk to him about it, he'll be all right.'

Daisy and Alexandra actually exchanged a fleeting glance at Manny's mention of Dirk Van Stroock, united emotionally on this one point. But they looked quickly away when he bracketed their work: Daisy took out another cigarette and lighted it with elaborate unconcern; Alexandra's sloe eyes rested thoughtfully on nothing for a few seconds.

A queer place to have ended up after all these years of intense, unremitting labor, after all her dreams of becoming an important *ballerina* in the great world of the real ballet. Yet there were the ineluctable facts of last night's thunderous applause; the whole-hearted appreciation of her most subtle and careful work by a New York revue audience; the weekly salary that was still incredible but enabled her to live comfortably at last and send startlingly large checks to her sister Irina, who had been living so meagerly in Paris for years — very tangible compensations, these, for the pricks her conscience sometimes gave her for leaving her second-string, modest-salaried job with the Monte Carlo Ballet Russe for this Broadway work, compensation even for being forced to give a joint interview with a mere tap dancer, who hated her and whom she hated.

A queer fate for a daughter of wealthy Russian parents who had packed her and Irina off to Paris before the Revolution, had lost all their land and money in a counter revolution, and then had been killed. Was this the twenty-two-year-old embodiment of the girl of eight to twelve who, because of her remarkable talent, had studied, free, with Olga Preobajenska in Paris — hard, clean, astringent years? Who had been thrilled by watching, and humbly taking part in, the ballet's glamorous culture of complex music and complex movement? Who had been stirred to the depths by the names of the magic gods of that world — Diaghilev, Nijinsky, Fokine, Bakst, Stravinsky, Karsavina — and had seen a few of them in the flesh? Who had worked and practiced harder than any other pupil Olga ever had and had finally left her to join an obscure Parisian ballet

troupe which quickly failed, catapulting her by a lucky chance into the Monte Carlo Ballet Russe, which shortly afterward came to America? Who, talented but young and inexperienced, wounded by the greater abilities and thrusting ambitions of the troupe's other members, had turned her own ambition to cutting through the jungle of other wills-to-success. . . . Who studied native African dances, rhythms, superstitions, and costumes, haunting the Metropolitan Museum when she was in New York, taking armfuls of books with her when the troupe toured? Who worked out a remarkable act to the last detail, her throat choking with awe and ecstasy at her own ingenuity and creative skill as it began at last to emerge? Who asked for, and got, an audition with Delmoni when 'Rise Above It!' had only two more rehearsal weeks ahead of it? Who was embraced, when she finished, by the impulsive young designer-director, into whose fertile and versatile brain a hundred ideas rushed for stunningly elaborating this amazing nucleus into an electric next-to-the-last act, moving Daisy's tap routine back one place from that coveted position?

Alexandra had only half finished the cigarette which she had lighted when she sat down; Daisy had taken a second puff on hers.

The Russian looked at the American across the smoke-blued room: so this was the girl she hadn't even noticed at rehearsals until her ostentatious resentment and hostility and contempt forced her to and drew her reluctantly into the long, covert warfare they had been waging. Well, her loud street clothes fitted her work — that funny inartistic stance, while heels and toes clattered a terrific din, that set, foolish grin, those breathless, ecstatic, idiot exclamations of 'Ho de ho!' and 'Ha cha cha!' punctuating the orchestra's vulgar screech. She could understand Daisy's — that was her name, wasn't it? — dislike of losing her penultimate position to another, but her new place was excellent, too, and her success last night had been tremendous. As great as her own, Alexandra admitted to herself — but such flippant, superficial, easy work! She thought with satisfaction of her own skill, her *whole body* trained by years of unremitting effort until it had the strength of steel, the resiliency of rubber, the virtuosity, in every muscle, of a concert pianist's fingers and wrists.

Manny, on the brink of speech again, had spread out the clippings in front of him, his ample, unsuspecting nose just above the exact

center of the impalpable rope which was sustained, motionless, in equilibrium, between Daisy and Alexandra by the sum of their tug-of-war yanks: the rush for the best 'second star' dressing-room in Boston and in New York (won once by Daisy, once by Alexandra); the subsequent battle for the most elaborate dressing-room decoration (same score); Daisy in the wings at Alexandra's climax one Boston night calling 'that's *arti*!' loudly; Alexandra in the wings at Daisy's climax the next night laughing a silvery, searing laugh; Daisy, the next night, spoiling Alexandra's opening by taking an extra bow after the curtain had already swung back on the African setting; Alexandra's complaint to Delmoni and Delmoni's rebuke to Daisy; then last night. . . .

'Not quite five after,' Manny said, 'they'll be here any — sorry there's this little — I know how busy you both —' His voice trailed off, then rose confidently again:

'Listen to the lead-off for the big rave-notices ad we're putting in tomorrow's papers.' His eyes darted from clipping to clipping. "'Season's first sure-fire musical success . . . this column's idea of the perfect happy-go-lavish revue . . . Dirk Van Stroock, Dutch-American nabob of pantomimists and singing comedians, at his top-notch best . . . fast-stepping, melodious, beautifully costumed and staged, with Mynheer Van Stroock displaying a hundred new treasures in his astounding repertoire of quippy songs and antic buffoonery.'"

He looked triumphantly from one face to the other; a question mark hovered over each.

'Got good news for you,' he prattled on, answering the silent question: 'Billy told me to give each of you a paragraph of the best lines you drew.'

Two blonde and two brunette eyes brightened with pleasure but no word was spoken. Manny gave a florid, preparatory cough and continued:

'This is what I'm taking for you, Daisy: "Brilliant new feminine tapster whose work is second only to that of Eleanor Powell . . . exciting is the word for Miss Darling's rhythmic Wuddy Wuddy Woo number, which she expertly taps out to ultra-modern jazz in front of a Lèger-like backdrop by Delmoni . . . we were much moved by this brilliant newcomer's refreshing variant of the ancient up-and-down-the-ladder routine: for her finale, the cubistic pattern of the modern mural behind her moved right out of its frame and onto

the stage, and she tapped intricately up one crazy side to the dizzy top and down the other in what Jimmy Durante would call a terrific finish.”

‘Say, that’s okey-doke,’ said Daisy, betrayed into enthusiasm, but immediately lowering her voice for: ‘Why, I guess that’ll be all right.’

Manny had already turned to the other: ‘And here’s what I have lifted for you, Alexandra: “A superb ballet artist with the jaw-breaking monnicker of Alexandra Shabelevska provides a splendid solo dance of stylized native African temper, listed as Kykunkor, The Witch Woman . . . this young Russian’s wizard witch dance in Delmoni’s sombrely magnificent African setting, with only the complicated rhythms of a native drummer for accompaniment, was (to these old eyes, ballet-bilious heretofore) a mounting, tingling triumph . . . keep your eye on La Shabelevska, the classic-minded hooper who has deigned to terp in this swanky musical . . .”’

Manny gurgled with self-esteem. ‘Took that last from *Variety*’s review of the Boston opening,’ he said, ‘makes a snappy conclusion, don’t you —’

Before she could answer, the elevator door clicked again and a reporter and photographer stampeded down the hall into the autumn room.

Next morning, the readers of the *New York World-Tribune* were edified by a frontpage interview with Daisy Darling and Alexandra Shabelevska. In the large photograph which topped the interesting reading matter, they smilingly posed with arms affectionately entwined, staring straight at each other with absolute incomprehension.

FOOL ABOUT A HORSE¹

By WILLIAM FAULKNER

(From *Scribner's Magazine*)

YES, sir. It wasn't Pap that bought one horse from Pat Stamper and then sold two back to him. It was Mammy. Her and Pat jest used Pap to trade through. Because we never left home that morning with Mammy's cream separator money to trade horses with nobody. And I reckon that if Pap had had any notion that he was fated to swap horses with Pat Stamper, they couldn't even have arrested him and taken him to town. We never even knowed it was Pat Stamper that had unloaded that horse on whoever it was Beasley Kemp got it from until we was halfway there. Because Pap admitted he was a fool about a horse but it wasn't that kind of a fool he meant. And once he was away from our lot and the neighbor men looking through the fence at whatever it was Pap had traded some more of Old Man Anse Holland's bob-wire and busted tools for this time, and Pap lying to them to jest exactly the right amount about how old it was and how much he give for it; — once Pap was away from there I don't reckon he was even the kind of a fool about a horse that Mammy claimed he was when we come up to the house that noon after we had shut the gate on the horse we had jest traded outen Beasley Kemp, and Pap taken his shoes off on the front gallery for dinner and Mammy standing there in the door, shaking the cold skillet at Pap and scolding and railing and Pap saying, 'Now Vynie; now Vynie. I always was a fool about a good horse and it ain't no use you a-scolding and jawing about it. You had better thank the Lord that when He give me a eye for horse-flesh He gave me a little jedgment and gumption along with it.'

Because it wasn't the horse. It wasn't the trade. It was a good trade, because Pap swapped Beasley a straight stock and fourteen rods of bob-wire and a old wore-out sorghum mill of Old Man Anse's for the horse, and Mammy admitted it was a good swap

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even for that horse, even for anything that could git up and walk from Beasley Kemp's lot to ourn by itself. Because like she said while she was shaking the skillet at Pap, even Pap couldn't git stung very bad in a horse trade because he never owned nothing that anybody would swap even a sorry horse for and even to him. And it wasn't because me and Pap had left the plows down in the bottom piece where Mammy couldn't see them from the house, and snuck the wagon out the back way with the straight stock and the wire and the sorghum mill while she thought we were still in the field. It wasn't that. It was like she knowed without having to be told what me and Pap never found out for a week yet: that Pat Stamper had owned that horse we traded outen Beasley Kemp and that now Pap had done caught the Pat Stamper sickness jest from touching it.

And I reckon she was right. Maybe to hisself Pap did call hisself the Pat Stamper of the Frenchman Bend country, or maybe even of all Beat Four. But I reckon that even when he was believing it the strongest, setting there on the top rail of the lot fence and the neighbor men coming up to lean on the fence and look at what Pap had brung home this time and Pap not bragging much and maybe not even lying much about it; I reckon that even then there was another part of his mind telling him he was safe to believe he was the Pat Stamper of Beat Four jest as long as he done it setting on that fence where it was about one chance in a million of Pat Stamper actually passing and stopping to put it to a test. Because he wouldn't no more have set out to tangle with Pat Stamper than he would have set out to swap horses with a water moccasin. Probly if he had knowed that Pat Stamper ever owned that horse we swapped outen Beasley, Pap wouldn't have traded for it at no price. But then, I reckon that a fellow who straggles by acci-dent into where yellow fever or moccasins is, don't aim to ketch fever or snakebite neither. But he sholy never aimed to tangle with Pat Stamper. When we started for town that morning with Beasley's horse and our mule in the wagon and that separator money that Mammy had been saving on for four years in Pap's pocket, we wasn't even thinking about horse trading, let alone about Pat Stamper, because we didn't know that Pat Stamper was in Jefferson and we didn't even know that he had owned the horse until we got to Varner's store. It was fate.

It was like the Lord Hissself had decided to spend Mammy's separator money for a horse; it would have had to been Him because wouldn't nobody else, leastways nobody that knowed Mammy, have risked doing it. Yes, sir. Pure fate. Though I will have to admit that fate picked a good, quick, willing hand when it picked Pap. Because it wasn't that kind of a fool about a horse that Pap meant he was.

No, sir. Not that kind of a fool. I reckon that while he was setting on the porch that morning when Mammy had done said her say for the time being and went back to the kitchen, and me done fetched the gourd of fresh water from the well, and the side meat plopping and hissing on the stove and Pap waiting to eat it and then go back down to the lot and set on the fence while the neighbor men come up in two's and three's to look at Pap's new horse, I reckon maybe in his own mind Pap not only knowed as much about horse trading as Pat Stamper, but he owned head for head as many of them as Old Man Anse hisself. I reckon that while he would set there on the fence, jest moving enough to keep outen the sun, with them two empty plows standing in the furrow down in the bottom piece and Mammy watching him outen the back window and saying, 'Horse trader! Setting there bragging and lying to a passel of shiftless men, and the weeds and morning glories climbing that thick in the corn and cotton that I am afraid to tote his dinner to him for fear of snakes'; I reckon Pap would look at whatever it was he had traded the mail box or the winter corn or something else that maybe Old Man Anse had done forgot he owned or leastways might not miss, and he would say to hisself: 'It's not only mine, but before God it's the prettiest drove of horses a man ever seen.'

II

It was pure fate. When we left for town that morning with Mammy's separator money, Pap never even aimed to use Beasley's horse at all because he knowed it probably couldn't make no twelve-mile trip to Jefferson and get back the same day. He aimed to go up to Old Man Anse's and borrow one of his mules to work with ourn; it was Mammy herself that done it, taunted him about the piece of crowbait he had bought for a yard ornament until

Pap said that by Godfrey he would show Mammy and all the rest of them that misdoubted he knowed a horse when he seen it, and so we went to the lot and put the new horse in the wagon with the mule. We had been feeding it heavy as it would eat for a week now and it looked a heap better than it did the day we got it. But even yet it didn't look so good, though Pap decided it was the mule that showed it up so bad; that when it was the only horse or mule in sight, it didn't look so bad and that it was the standing beside something else on four legs that hurt its looks. 'If we jest had some way to hitch the mule under the wagon where it wouldn't show and jest leave the horse in sight, it would be fine,' Pap said. But there wasn't no way to do that, so we jest done the best we could. It was a kind of doormat bay and so, with Pap standing about twenty foot away and squinching first one eye and then the other and saying, 'Bear down on it. You got to git the hide hot to make the har shine,' I polished it down with croker sacks the best I could. Pap thought about feeding it a good bait of salt in some corn and then turning it to water and hide some of the ribs, only we knowed that we wouldn't even get to Jefferson in one day, let alone come back, besides having to stop at ever creek and load it up again. So we done the best we could and then we started, with Mammy's separator money (it was twenty-seven dollars and sixty-five cents; it taken her four years to save it outen her egg- and quilt-money) tied up in a rag that she dared Pap to even open to count it before he handed it to Uncle Ike McCaslin at the store and had the separator in the wagon.

Yes, sir. Fate. The same fate that made Mammy taunt Pap into starting out with Beasley's horse; the same fate that made it a hot morning in July for us to start out on. Because when we left home that morning we wasn't even thinking about horse trading. We was thinking about horse, all right, because we were wondering if maybe we wasn't fixing to come back home that night with Beasley's horse riding in the wagon and me or Pap in the traces with the mule. Yes, sir. Pap eased that team outen the lot at sunup and on down the road toward Frenchman's Bend as slow and careful as arra horse and mule ever moved in this world, with me and Pap walking up ever hill that was slanted enough to run water down the ruts, and aiming to do that right on into Jefferson. It was the weather, the hot day, that done it.

Because here we was, about a mile from Varner's store, and Beasley's horse kind of half walking and half riding on the double tree, and Pap's face looking a little more and a little more concerned ever time our new horse failed to lift its feet high enough to make the next step, when all of a sudden that horse popped into a sweat. It flung its head up like it had been teched with a hot poker and stepped up into the collar, teching the collar for the first time since the mule had taken the weight off the breast yoke when Pap'd shaken out the whip inside the lot; and so here we come down the last hill and up to Varner's store and that horse of Beasley's with its head up and blowing froth and its eyes white-rimmed like these here colored dinner plates and Pap sawing back on the reins, and I be dog if it not only hadn't sweated into as pretty a blood bay as you ever see, but even the ribs didn't seem to show so much. And Pap, that had been talking about taking a back road so as to miss Varner's store altogether, setting there on the wagon seat, exactly like he would set on the lot fence where he knowed he would be safe from Pat Stamper, telling Jody Varner and them other men that Beasley's horse come from Kentucky. Jody Varner never even laughed. 'Kentucky, hey?' he says. 'Sho, now. That explains why it taken it so long. Herman Short swapped Pat Stamper a buckboard and a set of harness for it five years ago, and Beasley Kemp give Herman eight dollars for it last summer. How much did you give Beasley? Fifty cents?'

That's what done it. From then on, it was automatic. It wasn't the horse, the trade. It was still a good trade, because in a sense you might say that all Pap give Beasley for it was the straight stock, since the bob-wire and the sorghum mill belonged to Old Man Anse. And it wasn't the harness and the buckboard that Herman Short give Pat Stamper: it was that eight dollars that Beasley give Herman. That's what rankled Pap. Not that he held the eight dollars against Herman, because Herman had done already invested a buckboard and a set of harness. And besides, the eight dollars was still in the county, even if it was out of circulation, belonging to Herman Short, and so it didn't actually matter whether Herman had it or Beasley had it. It was Pat Stamper that rankled Pap. When a man swaps horse for horse, that's one thing. But when cash money starts changing hands, that's something else; and when a stranger comes into the country

and starts actual cash money jumping from hand to hand, it's like when a burglar breaks into your house and flings your clothes and truck from place to place even though he don't take nothing: it makes you mad. So it was not jest to unload Beasley's horse back onto Pat Stamper. It was to get Beasley's eight dollars back outen Pat some way. And so it was jest pure fate that had Pat Stamper camped right on the road we would take to Jefferson on the very day when me and Pap went to get Mammy's separator.

So I reckon the rest of it don't even hardly need to be told, except as a kind of sidelight on how, when a man starts out to plan to do something, he jest thinks he is planning: that what he is actually doing is giving the highball to misfortune, throwing open the switch and saying, 'All right, Bad Luck; come right ahead.' So here was Pat Stamper and that nigger magician of hisn camped in Hoke's pasture, right on the road we would have to pass to git to town, and here was Pap on the way to town with two live animals and twenty-seven dollars and sixty-five cents in cash, and feeling that the entire honor and pride of the science and pastime of horse trading in Yoknapatawpha County depended on him to vindicate it. So the rest of it don't even need to be told. I don't need to tell whether me and Pap walked back home or not, because anybody that knows Pat Stamper knows that he never bought a horse or a mule outright in his life; that he swapped you something for it that could at least walk out of sight. So the only point that might interest you is, what was pulling the wagon when we got back home. And what Mammy done when she said, 'Where is my separator?' and Pap saying, 'Now Vynie; now Vynie—' Yes, sir. When it come down to the trade, it wasn't Pat Stamper after all that Pap was swapping horses with. It was the demon rum.

Because he was desperate. After the first swap he was desperate. Before that he was jest mad, like when you dream you are right in the middle of the track and the train a-coming; it's right on you and you can't run or dodge because all of a sudden you realize you are running in sand and so after a while it don't even matter if the train catches you or not because all you can think about is being mad at the sand. That's how Pap was. For ever mile we made toward Jefferson, the madder Pap got. It wasn't at Beasley's horse, because we nursed it on toward town the same way we

nursed it to Varner's store until it begun to sweat. It was them eight cash dollars that that horse represented. I don't even recollect just when and where we found out that Pat Stamper was at Jefferson that day. It might have been at Varner's store. Or it might have been that we never had to be told; that for Pap to carry out the fate that Mammy started when she taunted him about Beasley's horse, Pat Stamper would jest have to be in Jefferson. Because Pap never even taken time to find out where Pat was camped, so that when we did roll into town we had done already swapped. Yes, sir. We went up them long hills with Pap and me walking and Beasley's horse laying into the collar the best it could but with the mule doing most of the pulling and Pap walking on his side of the wagon and cussing Pat Stamper and Herman Short and Beasley Kemp and Jody Varner, and we went down the hills with Pap holding the wagon broke with a sapling pole so it wouldn't shove Beasley's horse through the collar and turn it wrong-side-ward like a sock and Pap still a-cussin Pat Stamper and Herman and Beasley and Varner, until we come to the three-mile bridge and Pap turned off the road and druv into the bushes and taken the mule outen the harness and knotted one rein so I could ride it and give me the quarter and told me to git for town and git the dime's worth of saltpeter and the nickel's worth of tar and the number ten fish hook.

So we didn't git to town until that afternoon. We went straight to Pat Stamper's camp in Hoke's pasture where I had done already passed it twice on the mule, with Beasley's horse laying into the collar sho enough now and its eyes looking nigh as wild as Pap's looked a hour later when we come outen McCaslin's back door with the separator, and foaming a little at the mouth where Pap had rubbed the rest of the saltpeter into its gums and with a couple of as pretty tarred bobwire cuts on its chest as you could want and another one on its flank where Pap had worked the fish hook under its hide where he could tech it by drooping the rein now and then; yes, sir, turning into Hoke's pasture on two wheels and Pap sawing back on the reins and Pat Stamper's nigger running up and grabbing the bridle to keep Beasley's horse from running right into the tent where Pat slept and Pat hisself coming outen the tent with that ere cream-colored Stetson cocked over one eye and them eyes the color of a new plow point and jest about as warm. 'That's a pretty lively looking horse you got there,' Pat says.

'Hell fire, yes!' Pap says. 'It durn nigh killed me and this boy both before I could git it into that ere gate yonder. That's why I got to git shut of it. I expect you to beat me, but I got to trade. So come on and beat me quick and give me something I won't be skeered to walk up to.'

And I still believe that Pap was right, that it was the right system. It had been five years since Pat had seen the horse, or anyway since he had unloaded it on Herman Short, so me and Pap figured that the chance of Pat's recognizing it would be about the same as for a burglar to recognize a dollar watch that happened to snag onto his clothes in passing five years ago. And it was the right system, to rush up and saw we jest had to trade instead of jest drifting up and hanging around for Pat to persuade us. And Pap wasn't trying to beat Pat bad. All he wanted was to vindicate that ere eight cash dollars. That was it: the eight cash dollars' worth of the pride of Yoknapatawpha County horse trading, and Pap the self-appointed champion and knight doing it not for profit but for honor. And I be dog if I still don't believe it worked, that Pap did fool Pat, and that it was because of what Pat aimed to swap to Pap and not because Pat recognized Beasley's horse, that he refused to trade anyway except team for team. Or I don't know. Maybe Pap was so busy fooling Pat that Pat never had to fool Pap, like a man that has jest *got* to do something, who no matter how hard he tries he jest half does it, while a man that don't care whether he does it or not, does it twice as good with jest half the work. So there we was: the nigger holding the two mules that Pat wanted to swap for our team, and Pat chewing his tobacco slow and gentle and steady and watching Pap with them plow point eyes, and Pap standing there with that look on his face that was desperate not because he was skeered yet but because he was having to think fast, realizing now that he had done got in deeper than he aimed to and that he would either have to shet his eyes and bust on through, or back out and quit. Because right here was where Pat Stamper showed how come he was Pat Stamper. If he had jest started in to show Pap what a bargain he would be getting in them two mules, I reckon Pap would have backed out. But Pat didn't. He fooled Pap exactly like one first-class burglar would purely and simply refuse to tell another first-class burglar where the safe was at.

'But I don't want to swap for a whole team,' Pap said. 'I already

got a good mule. It's the horse I don't want. Trade me a mule for the horse.'

'No,' Pat said. 'I don't want no wild horse neither. Not that I won't trade for anything that can walk, provided I can trade my way. But I ain't going to trade for that horse alone because I don't want it no more than you do. What I am trading for is that mule. And besides, this here team of mine is matched. I aim to get about three times for the pair of them what I would get trading either of them single.'

'But you will still have a team to trade with,' Pap says.

'No,' Pat said. 'I aim to get more from you for them than if the team was broken. If it's a single mule you want, you better try somebody else.'

So Pap looked at the mules again. That was it. They looked all right. They looked jest exactly all right. They didn't look too good and they didn't look too bad. Neither of them looked quite as good as our mule, but the two of them looked jest a leetle mite better than Beasley's horse and one mule of anybody's. That was it. If they had looked like a bargain, I reckon even I, a twelve-year-old boy, would have had sense enough to tell Pap to come on and let's git outen there. But Lord, I reckon we was doomed from the very second when Jody Varner told about that eight dollars. I reckon Pat Stamper knowed we was doomed the very second he looked up and seen the nigger holding Beasley's horse outen the tent. I reckon he knowed right then that he wouldn't have to try to trade, that all he would need to do would jest to say No long enough. So that's what he done, leaning against our wagon bed with his thumbs hooked into the top of his pants, chewing his tobacco and watching Pap going through the motion of examining them mules again. Because even I knowed that Pap had done already traded, that he had done walked out into what he thought was a spring branch and then found it was quicksand, and now he knowed he couldn't even stop long enough to turn back. 'All right,' he said. 'I'll take them.'

So the nigger taken Beasley's horse and the mule outen the wagon and put our new team in, and me and Pap went on to town. And before God, them mules still looked all right. I be dog if I didn't think that maybe Pap had walked into that Stamper quicksand and then got out again. Or maybe it was jest getting outen Stamper's

reach with the harness left. Because when we got back into the road and outen sight of Stamper's camp, Pap's face begun to look like it would when he would set on the lot fence at home and tell the fellows how he was a fool about a horse but not a durn fool. It wasn't easy yet; it was jest watchful, setting there and feeling out our new team. We was right at town now and so he wouldn't have much time to feel them out, but we would have a good chance to on the road home. 'By Godfrey,' Pap said, 'if they can walk home a-tall, I have got that ere eight dollars back, durn him.'

Because that nigger of Pat Stamper's was a artist. Because I swear to Godfrey them mules looked all right. They jest looked like two ordinary not extry good mules you might see in a hundred wagons on the road. I noticed how they had a kind of jerky way of starting off, first one jerking into the collar and then jerking back and then the other jerking into the collar and then jerking back, and even after we was in the road and the wagon rolling good, one of them taken a spell of some sort and snatched hisself crossways in the traces like he aimed to go back, but then Stamper had jest told us that they was a matched team; he never had said they had worked together as a matched team, and they was a well matched team in the sense that neither one of them seemed to have any idea as to jest when the other one aimed to start moving or what direction it was going to take. But Pap got them straightened out and we went on; we was jest starting up that ere big hill into town, when they popped into a sweat jest like Beasley Kemp's horse done back yonder on the other side of Varner's store. But that was all right; it was hot enough; that was when I first taken notice that that rain was going to come up before dark; I mind how I was jest thinking how it was going to ketch us before we got home when this here sweat taken them mules. And that was all right; I didn't blame them for sweating; the trouble was, it was a different kind of sweat from the kind Beasley's horse had given us to expect. I mind how I was looking at a big hot-looking bright cloud over to the southwest when all of a sudden I realized that the wagon had done stopped going forward up the hill and was starting down it backward and then I looked in time to see both them mules this time crossways in the traces and kind of glaring at one another across the tongue and Pap trying to straighten them out and his eyes looking a right smart like the mules' eyes, and then all of a sudden they straightened out

and I mind how I thought it was a good thing they happened to have their backs toward the wagon when they did, because I reckon they moved at the same time for the first time in their lives, for the first time since Pap owned them at least; and, gentlemen, here we come swurging up that hill and into town like a roach down a rat-hole, with the wagon on two wheels and Pap sawing back on the lines and hollering, 'Hell fire, hell fire,' and folks scattering, and Pap jest managed to swing them into the alley behind McCaslin's store and stopped them by locking our nigh front wheel with another wagon's and the other mules (they was hitched) help to put the brakes on. So it was a good crowd by then, helping us to git untangled, and Pap led our team on to Uncle Ike's back door and tied them up close to the door handle and me and him went in to get the separator, with the folks still coming up and saying, 'It's that team of Stamper's' and Pap kind of breathing hard and looking a right smart less easy in the face than when we had left Stamper's camp even, besides most all-fired watchful, saying, 'Come on here. Let's git that durn separator of your mammy's loaded and git outen here.' So we give Uncle Ike the rag with Mammy's money in it and me and Pap taken up the separator and started back out to the wagon, to where we had left it. It was still there. I mind how I could see the bed of it where Pap had drawed it up to the door, and I could see the folks from the waist up standing in the alley, and then I realized that it was about twice as many folks looking at our team as it had been when we left. I reckon Pap never noticed it, because he was too busy hurrying that 'ere separator along. So I jest stepped aside to have a look at what the folks was looking at and then I realized that I could see the front of our wagon and the place where me and Pap had left the mules, but that I couldn't see no mules. So I don't recollect whether I dropped my side of the separator or if Pap dropped hisn or if we still carried it when we come to where we could see out the door and see the mules. They were still there. They were just laying down. Pap had snubbed them right up to the handle of Uncle Ike's back door, with the same rein run through both bits, and now they looked jest exactly like two fellows that had done hung themselves in one of these here suicide packs, with their heads snubbed up together and their tongues hanging out and their necks stretched about four foot and their legs folded back under them like shot rabbits until Pap jumped down and cut the

harness. Yes, sir. A artist. He had give them to the exact inch jest enough of whatever it was, to get them into town and off the square before it played out.

And this here is what I meant when I said it was desperation. I can see Pap now, backed off into that corner behind Uncle Ike's plows and cultivators and such, with his face white and his voice shaking and his hand shaking so he couldn't hardly hand me the six bits. 'Go to Doc Peabody's store,' he says, 'and get me a pint of whiskey and git it quick.'

Yes, sir. Desperate. It wasn't even quicksand now. It was a whirlpool, and Pap with jest one jump left. He drunk that pint of whiskey in two drinks and set the empty bottle careful in the corner of Uncle Ike's warehouse, and we went back to the wagon. The mules was still up all right, and we loaded the separator in and Pap eased them away careful, with the folks all watching and telling one another it was a Pat Stamper team and Pap setting there with his face red now instead of white and them clouds were heavy and the sun was even gone now but I don't think Pap ever noticed it. And we hadn't eaten too, and I don't think Pap noticed that neither. And I be dog if it didn't seem like Pat Stamper hadn't moved too, standing there at the gate to his stock pen, with that Stetson cocked and his thumbs still hooked into the top of his pants, and Pap setting on the wagon trying to keep his hands from shaking and the team stopped now with their heads down and their legs spraddled and breathing like starting up a sawmill on a Monday morning. 'I come to trade back for my team,' Pap said.

'What's the matter?' Stamper says. 'Don't tell me these are too lively for you, too. They don't look it.'

'All right,' Pap said. 'All right. I jest want my team back. I'll give you four dollars to trade back. That's all I got. And I got to have them. Make your four dollars, and give me my team.'

'I ain't got your team,' Stamper says. 'I didn't want that horse either. I told you that. So I got shet of it right away.'

Pap set there for a while. It was all clouded over now, and cooler; you could even smell the rain. 'All right,' Pap said. 'But you still got the mule. All right. I'll take it.'

'For what?' Stamper says. 'You want to swap that team for your mule?' Sho. Pap wasn't trading. He was desperate, setting there like he couldn't even see, with Stamper leaning easy against

the gate and looking at him for a minute. 'No,' he says. 'I don't want them mules. Yours is the best. I wouldn't trade that way, even.' He spit, easy and careful, before he looked at Pap again. 'Besides, I done included your mule into another team, with another horse. You want to look at it?'

'All right,' Pap said. 'How much?'

'Don't you even want to see it first?' Stamper says.

'All right,' Pap said. So the nigger led out the horse, a little dark brown horse; I remember how even with it clouded up to rain and no sun, how the horse shined; a horse a little bigger than the one we traded Stamper, and hog fat. Yes, sir. That's jest exactly how it was fat: not like a horse is fat but like a hog: fat right up to its ears and looking tight as a drum; it was so fat it couldn't hardly walk, putting its feet down like they didn't have no weight nor feeling in them. 'It's too fat to last,' Pap said. 'It won't even git me home.'

'That's what I think myself,' Stamper said. 'That's why I am willing to git shet of it.'

'All right,' Pap said. 'But I got to try it.'

'Try it?' Stamper said. Pap didn't answer. He jest got down from the wagon careful and went to the horse. It had a hackamore on and Pap taken the rein outen the nigger's hand and started to git on the horse. 'Wait,' Stamper says. 'What you fixing to do?'

'Going to try it,' Pap said. 'I done traded a horse with you once today.' Stamper looked at Pap again for a minute. Then he spit again and kind of stepped back.

'All right,' he said. 'Help him up, Jim.' So the nigger help Pap onto the horse, only the nigger never had time to jump back because as soon as Pap's weight come onto the horse's back it was like Pap had a live wire in his britches. It throwed Pap hard and Pap got up without no change on his face a-tall and went back to the horse and taken the hackamore again and the nigger help him up again, with Stamper standing there with his hands hooked into his pants tops, watching. And the horse slammed Pap off again and Pap got up again with his face jest the same and went back and taken the hackamore from the nigger again when Stamper stopped him. That was exactly how Pap did it, like he wanted the horse to throw him and hard, not to try to hurt hisself, but like the ability of his bones and meat to feel that 'ere hard ground was all he had left

to pay for a horse with life enough in it to git us home. 'Here, here,' Stamper says. 'Are you trying to kill yourself?'

'All right,' Pap says. 'How much?'

'Come on into the tent and have a drink,' Stamper says.

So I waited in the wagon. It was beginning to blow a little now, and we hadn't brought no coats with us. But there was some croker sacks in the wagon that Mammy made us bring to wrap her separator in and so I was wrapping the separator up in them when the nigger led out a horse and buggy and then Pap and Stamper come outen the tent and Pap come to the wagon. He never looked at me. He jest reached in and taken the separator outen the sacks and put it into the buggy and then him and Stamper got in and druv away. They went back toward town and then they went out of sight and I seen the nigger watching me. 'You fixing to git wet fo you get home,' he said.

'I reckon so,' I said.

'You want to eat a snack of dinner until they git back?' the nigger said.

'I ain't hungry,' I said. So he went on into the tent and I waited in the wagon. Yes, sir, it was sholy going to rain; I mind how I thought that anyway now we could use the croker sacks to try to keep dry in. Then Pap and Stamper come back and Pap never looked at me neither. He went into the tent and I could see him drinking outen a bottle and then putting the bottle back into his shirt. I reckon Stamper give him that bottle. Pap never said so, but I reckon Stamper did. So then the nigger put our mule and the new horse in the wagon and Pap come outen the tent and got in. Stamper and the nigger both help him now.

'Don't you reckon you better let the boy drive?' Stamper says.

'I'll drive,' Pap said. 'By Godfrey, maybe I can't swap a horse with you, but I can still drive it.'

'Sho now,' Stamper said. 'That horse will surprise you.'

III

It did. Yes, sir. It surprised us, jest like Stamper said. It happened jest before dark. The rain, the storm, come up before we had gone a mile and we rode in it for two hours before we found a old barn to shelter under, setting hunched under them croker sacks (I

mind how I thought how in a way I almost wished Mammy knew we never had the separator because she had wanted it for so long that maybe she would rather for Uncle Ike to own it and it safe and dry, than for her to own it five miles from home in a wagon in the rain) and watching our new horse that was so fat it even put its feet down like they never had no feeling nor weight, that ever now and then, even in the rain, would take a kind of flinching jerk like when Pap's weight came down onto its back at Stamper's camp. But we didn't catch on then, because I was driving now, sho enough, because Pap was laying flat in the wagon bed with the rain popping him in the face and him not even knowing it, and me setting on the seat and watching our new horse change from a black horse into a bay. Because I was jest twelve and me and Pap had always done our horse trading along that country road that run past our lot. So I jest druv into the first shelter I come to and shaken Pap awake. The rain had cooled him off some, but even without that he would have sobered quick. 'What?' he says. 'What is it?'

'The horse, Pap!' I hollered. 'It's done changed color!'

Yes, sir. It sobered him quick. We was both outen the wagon then and Pap's eyes popping sho enough now and a bay horse standing there where he had went to sleep looking at a black one. Because I was jest twelve; it happened too fast for me; I jest mind seeing Pap tech the horse's back at a spot where ever now and then the backband must have teched it (I tell you, that nigger was a artist) and then the next I knowed that horse was plunging and swurging; I remember dodging jest as it slammed into the wall and then me and Pap heard a sound like when a automobile tire picks up a nail: a sound like Whoosh! and then the rest of that shiny fat black horse we had got from Pat Stamper vanished. I don't mean that me and Pap was standing there with jest our mule left. We had a horse too. Only it was the same one we had left home with that morning and that we had swapped Beasley Kemp the sorghum mill and the bobwire and the straight stock for two weeks ago. We even got our fish hook back, with the barb still bent where Pap had bent it and the nigger had jest moved it a little. But it wasn't until we was home the next day at daylight that we found the hand pump valve behind its off fore leg.

And that's about all. Because Mammy was up and seen us pass, and so after a while we had to go to the house, because me and Pap

hadn't et since twenty-four hours ago. So we went to the house, with Mammy standing in the door saying, 'Where's my separator?' and Pap saying how he always had been a fool about a horse and he couldn't help it and Mammy couldn't neither and that to jest give him time, and Mammy standing there looking at him and then she begun to cry and it was the first time I ever seen her cry. She cried hard, standing there in her old wrapper, not even hiding her face, saying, 'Fool about a horse! Yes, but why the horse? why the horse?'

'Now, Vynie; now, Vynie,' Pap said. Then she turned and went back into the house. We didn't go in. We could hear her, but she wasn't in the kitchen, and Pap told me to go around to the kitchen and see if she was fixing breakfast and then come down to the lot and tell him, and I did but she wasn't in the kitchen. So we set on the lot fence, and then we seen her coming down the hill from the house; she was dressed and had on her shawl and sunbonnet and her gloves, and she went into the stable without looking at us and we could hear her saddling the mule and Pap told me to go and ask her if she wanted him to help her and I did and she didn't answer and I saw her face that time and so I come back and set on the fence with Pap and we saw her ride out of the barn on the mule. She was leading Beasley Kemp's horse. It was still black in places where the rain had streaked it. 'If it hadn't been for that durn rain, we might could have got shet of it,' Pap said.

So we went to the house then, and I cooked breakfast and me and Pap et and then Pap taken a nap. He told me to watch for her from the gallery, but me and him neither never much thought to see her soon. We never seen her until next morning. We was cooking breakfast when we heard the wagon and I looked out and it was Odum Tull's wagon and Mammy was getting outen it and I come back to the kitchen jest before Pap left for the stable. 'She's got the separator,' I told Pap.

'I reckon it didn't happen to be our team in Odum's wagon,' Pap said.

'No, sir,' I says. So we saw her go into the house with the separator.

'I reckon likely she will wait to put on her old wrapper first,' Pap said. 'We ought to started breakfast sooner.' It did take about that long. And then we could hear it. It made a good strong sound, like it would separate milk good and fast. Then it stopped. 'It's too bad

she ain't got but the one gallon,' Pap said. 'You go and look in the kitchen.' So I went, and sho enough, she was cooking breakfast. But she wouldn't let us eat it in the kitchen. She handed it out the door to us.

'I am going to be busy in here and I don't aim to have you all in the way,' she said. It was all right now. Her face was quiet now; it was jest busy. So me and Pap went out to the well and et, and then we heard the separator again.

'I didn't know it would go through but one time,' Pap said.

'Maybe Uncle Ike showed her how to do it,' I said.

'I reckon she is capable of running it right,' Pap said. 'Like she wants it to run, anyhow.' Then it stopped, and me and Pap started down to the barn but she called us and made us bring the dishes to the kitchen door. Then we went down to the lot and set on the fence, only, like Pap said, without no stock to look at, it wasn't no comfort in it. 'I reckon she jest rode up to that durn feller's tent and said, "Here's your team. Now you git me my separator and git it quick; I got to ketch a ride back home,"' Pap said. And then after a while we heard it again, and that afternoon we walked up to Old Man Anse's to borrow a mule to finish the lower piece with, but he never had none to spare now. So he jest cussed around a while and then we come on back and set on the fence. And sure enough, pretty soon we could hear Mammy starting it up and it running strong and steady, like it would make the milk fly. 'She is separating it again,' Pap said. 'It looks like she is fixing to get a heap of pleasure and comfort outen it.'

GOODBYE TO CAP'M JOHN^{*}

By S. S. FIELD

(From *The Southern Review*)

MY UNCLE, Cap'm John Bell, is a big man with steady eyes. He used to look rather silly in his golfing pants, those transparent linen tights that I dare to remember him in some fifteen years ago — a man who had built up a rugged deep-water towing and dredging business when New Orleans was still a mud flat.

But he has given up the game of golf now. Now he is just rounding that big turn in the weary river, as he says, where the rest is an easy, wide swing down to salt water and the open sea. And so he sits a great deal of the time in the towing office now, looking out over the river, watching the querulous gulls with his distant eyes: the nearly deserted river since the city administration raised the docking fees to the level of the bonded indebtedness. Usually he is fiddling with something, a pencil or his watch chain, looking out at the mile of bending yellow river. He spends a lot of his time that way.

But fifteen or twenty years ago he had a number of the fancy kind of friends, among whom he was compelled to move through a period of uncomfortable collars with the silent and half-smiling suspicion of a roughshod stranger caught in the middle of a minuet.

Because fifteen or twenty years ago he had made enough money, the step into society was down, not up: a man who had generations of tugboats and train ferries and deep-sea barges named for him and for the women of his family, and with generations of river niggers in turn named for the boats. And since it is the women in a man's family who make a business of society, the godmothers of the barges managed it irrespective of his trade and thanks to its profit.

He was saddled first with one of our city's carnival organizations, one of the better ones, and so I remember him also as a prince: a massive man in button shoes, with the edge of his long underwear showing beneath the elastic of his knee breeches. It was his only carnival appearance; I was there with my mother to watch the night parade from his balcony when he dressed for that ball. 'Filthy

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business,' he said, glancing down at me once, tentative, alert; standing in massive and outlandish gravity, looking at himself. I was eleven. He always addressed me as one man to another, as a philosopher, say, to a scientific man, perhaps out of respect for my mother's brave hope or perhaps as his own subtle suggestion that I might continue my growing along masculine lines. 'Not many of them seem to on your side of the family, Martha,' he used to tell my mother. But standing there that night inspecting his silken bulk, we both were a little anxious. 'Yes,' he said.

'Yes, sir,' I said.

'It's not the way I look. I look all right. But it's why I look this way.' And he stared past himself in the big gold mirror. 'I never wanted to get this high,' he said.

He took up golf as the natural and most hardy adjunct to the launching of his family in society.

Cap'm John was in society altogether for about four years. He could have stayed there had he wished. He could have steered a carnival float down Canal Street year after year with all the papal altitude of a ferry boat captain and with about as much variety, but he got out. He gave his golf sticks to a negro named Hopper Bell and he went back to sit in the towing office or in the wheel house of a sea-going tug. 'Where I belong,' he said. He returned to his river and to himself on the day of his third golf tournament; on the day that Frohman died. Frohman was a negro, too.

It is not surprising that at fifty-five my uncle, Cap'm John, excelled at golf. Twenty years ago in New Orleans the game was played by a handful of elderly or ailing gentlemen who would attack the ground with the deliberation and the awkwardness and somewhat the swagger of small boys learning to chop wood — and my uncle was a larger man than most. It is less surprising that he should have excelled at the game than that he should have played it at all. Because he saw beyond that game; as though it were a bend in the river (and so it was), just as he saw beyond most things — himself, for instance. He used to confide in me in those days, and even then I must have known that he was seeing far beyond my thin legs and my eleven years, placing his confidences upon some later pinnacle to which I might one day climb or not climb. It made me walk straighter, with wider and more alert eyes. Like the thing he said

one day about golf: 'It is no game for you, you know,' he said. 'You look mighty neat today.'

'No, sir,' I said. 'Why? Yes, sir, my stockings...'

'You should have one stocking coming down,' he said. 'With both your stocking up you'll be a poet. Because —' he said. 'Golf is a circular path. It is for old men who have nowhere to go. Going, you know; that is the thing.'

'Yes, sir,' I said, secretly loosening one of my pants buckles.

'But few men think of going,' he said, fiddling with the golf ball and looking off... I remember how he tried to tell me then about golf: about how the things a man does to excess are the measure of his soul, and how going was better than golf; how going holds something finer than the safe little positiveness of the four walls of circumstance, something better than the smallness, the immediacy of the shiny metal blades — the mashies and the niblicks whipped through the grass in pursuit of a little white ball, it also a sphere, resolving into an instant exaltation or despair... 'It is like the moon.' He held up the golf ball. 'With its little craters. Never play golf or pool... or bridge,' he said, 'and your chances will be better. Fore.'

'Yes, sir,' I said. He won his second golf tournament that summer.

I was in the towing office early on the day that Frohman died. I had been promised a ride on the new *Martha R. Bell* and so both of my stockings were down by the time I had run from the street car to the docks and up the stairs. I found Cap'm John standing at the window watching the river. 'Good morning, Cap'm,' I said. I sat on the high stool, hoping he would notice my stockings.

'Good morning,' he said. He said it slowly. 'I'm afraid we can't go today.' My heart stopped for a sickening moment. 'One of my niggers has been hurt,' he said. 'Another one. I guess we'll have to see what we can do.'

'Yes, sir,' I said. 'What happened to him?'

'He was shot.'

I whistled. 'Where was he shot? How did he get shot? Who shot him, Cap'm John? What...'

'I don't know,' Cap'm John said. We were already descending the stairs without my noticing it.

'Will he die?' I said.

'I don't know,' Cap'm John said.

'When was he shot? Today, was he? This morning?' I had to run to keep up. We were going fast and both of my stockings were well down. 'Who was it, Cap'm John? Which one of them was it?'

'Frohman,' Cap'm John said. 'My caddy.' That was when I remembered that the summer before, it had been Snag.

Snag was a crippled negro who had caddied for my uncle when he won his first golf tournament. Cap'm John had been fond of Snag. He was fond of all negroes, and I remember how pleased both he and Snag would be over any golf shot the two of them contrived to make; it was as though Snag carrying the golf bag and handing the stick was half of the shot without which teeing the ball and driving it could not have had any meaning whatever, and Snag would scramble along behind Cap'm John, fast, with all the keys of a grand piano displayed in his face, saying 'Wham, Cap'm Jawn suh! Yes, suh! Us set thatun down like a fo' bits bet. Wham!' all the way to the next shot.

But Snag used to swim in the river. He believed it would help his undeveloped leg. He had a mongrel dog and the two of them would swim on warm mornings up at a great sweeping bend of levee and wilderness beyond the golf course. Sometimes when the current was gone the two of them would swim across. It was on an empty Sunday morning that Snag was killed. He hadn't seen the oil tanker when she came around the bend. They were out in the middle, then, just two black specks on the yellow vastness. Then the long blast came like a mighty trumpet. They said that the nigger must have misjudged their swing. They were already well on the turn when they saw him and they said that they eased the wheel to straighten out and pass the nigger on starboard. They said that he must have just put it to a guess and he guessed wrong because they said that he had two-thirds of the river to swim in but that he turned back and so they put the wheel hard to starboard and then he turned back again — the two of them, the nigger and the dog, swimming back and forth each time in a shorter arc until they could see his face stretched like laughter in the sunshine with all the white teeth, or like a grimace of joyous surprise, recognition, and with men even running forward, waving from the swinging cliff (she was high, empty) and the long trumpet blast right up to the moment he was struck and

they wasted the life preserver. He was struck by the great bulging side, nearly amidship, as the wall of steel swung gatelike and fast with the wheel hard over. They saw only the hand and the vanishing gleam of teeth and then nothing. And now it was Frohman.

It was my first visit to a charity hospital. It must have been Cap'm John's first visit, too, for the following year he gave the negroes a hospital of their own. 'It's like the inside of a swill pot,' Cap'm John said as we waited in the grimy hallway, and he began to curse them for a lot of unclean butchers. 'I don't know that your mother would approve of this, and I can't say that I'd blame her. But then you may remember it; come along, then, here we go.'

I remember it. Frohman had the face, the nostrils, the eyes, the color of that central figure in most stained glass windows, after the sun has gone down. He was in a ward with unwashed floor and walls among a dozen other negroes in beds, men and women whose dumb eyes followed us in hope. The white rolling irises of Frohman's eyes spoke first when he saw Cap'm John. Then his voice came, very thin now, with a kind of gasping of the light servility and the swagger and the old meaningless effusion. 'Yes suh, Cap'm Jawn, suh. Young Cap'm, suh. I jes had to lef you know . . . how I'm is, Cap'm Jawn. Account of how me and you was gwi wham that ball in that turment tomorrow . . . Account of how me and you was gwi . . .'

I remember the long black hand moving on the sheet. Then the doctor came. He seemed too young and thin to be a good doctor. He was explaining the case and drawing with a scalpel on the chart. His voice seemed insolent with gaiety, so near the lean gourd head and eyes of Frohman. I dared to look once more at those eyes that saw only Cap'm John. 'Altogether negligible prospects,' the doctor was saying and drawing. 'A split bullet. You are familiar with the stem and blossom of the tube lily? The split bullet describes that lovely plant form within the intestines; here you have the stem and here you have the blossom forming —' I could feel Cap'm John looking inside of the man and waiting too long. When he spoke his voice was quiet and tightening like a warping hawser.

'What are you?' he said. 'The gardener? Get this boy moved into a private room. Get out of here and get me a doctor. Get me the head surgeon, not a florist!' And the doctor had somehow vanished.

And so we stood there. It was as though Frohman and Cap'm

John and I were each looking at a point somewhere within Frohman, and then it was as though the point, as we watched it, had quietly gone somewhere beyond Frohman and we watched it go, Frohman watching it too, and then our eyes stopped, Frohman's did, and Cap'm John's went on still further beyond that point which Frohman had recognized as the logical place to stop. Because the pain seemed to go out of Frohman's eyes. 'Jes account of that turment tomorrow, Cap'm Jawn,' he said. The shape of his head made me want to cry. 'Account of how me and you was gwi wham that ball tomorrow . . .' Cap'm John's eyes looked now at the new point, the Tomorrow of Frohman's voice, suspended somewhere in the sterile half-light above the bed where the thin profusion, the apologia in little thin strutful vowels, issued forth once more; and then it was as though the other point and this one had become the same and I saw that the corners of Cap'm John's mouth were down and the thin voice was saying, 'You got to git mo' right wris' in there, Cap'm, and mind you don't lif' you haid —' Then the pale irises rolled back. The pain on his face was like glory. 'I ain't be cahyin yo' bag but us'll be pullin' for you, Cap'm Jawn. Me and ole Snag.' He looked again, his teeth showing again. 'But jes account of that turment, Cap'm Jawn . . . I be thinking if all thing don't go right . . . some kind of lil sen'-over, Cap'm, when you wins that turment . . . Like old Snag used to say, Wham, Cap'm Jawn suh —' Then I was watching the eyes again. 'Wham, Cap'm Jawn. Wham, Cap'm. Wham, Ca — . . . wham.' Then he was still looking, eagerly now, as though he were watching the flight of a ball, high and far; it too a sphere resolving into an instant exaltation or despair — but he no longer seemed to see. That is the way I remember it.

I cried on the way out. Cap'm John put his arm around me and patted my shoulder. 'That,' Cap'm John said, 'was death. Come along, now.'

And so that's how it came to be Hopper Bell's time. It was as if besides Cap'm John's sticks and his linen knickers (through which could be seen with infallible regularity, like an eccentricity in dress, the outline and even the patented seat arrangement of my uncle's underdrawers — until even his underdrawers became an incontrovertible public fact, an incident to recognition, along with his honesty, his button shoes, his size, and his job) — as if besides the

sticks and the transparent tights, Cap'm John owned also a private stable of three negroes concomitant to his golf and graded in seniority: Snag, Frohman, Hopper Bell. And now it was Hopper Bell.

And I must say this to Hopper Bell's ghost — wherever it is: that there would have been no cheap tin trophy won by our stable that day had Cap'm John known, as I knew, about the monstrous superstition among those negroes. Because maybe one of them helped to cart the furrowed despair of Frohman to the hospital (they took him there in an ice wagon) and maybe Frohman (he was delirious) had had a vision; I don't know. At any rate, in the lush harangue and babble of the caddy house that day, on the heels of Frohman's death, they knew that there would be three. And now it was Hopper Bell.

He was a tall, thin-headed negro, very black and quiet. He was beautiful, his face and his eyes and the angle of his long head which he carried to one side in a gentle manner and on the top of which he wore (with the pious placidity of a black young saint) a soiled, red bell-hop's cap with brass buttons.

But I will always remember Hopper Bell's face on that day that he caddied for my uncle's last golf tournament — the wild, agonized, up-gazing face with the mute velvet eyes. Perhaps it was most beautiful then; it has been stamped upon my mind in pain for such a long time. Because I was there that day of the third caddy and the third tournament. I was there and I knew and I didn't stop them. Following along in the determined little coterie of my uncle and negroes and friends all the way around the circular path, with my stockings down and panic in my mind, I knew and I didn't stop the tournament. I didn't say, 'Cap'm John, excuse me, sir, but I must talk with you alone.' I didn't say, 'Cap'm John, sir, please. Do with me what you will. Kill me, hate me, do anything to me, but please don't finish this tournament.' And maybe that is why his face has been stamped upon my mind in pain for so long. Hopper Bell's face.

Because I was there that day, because I had to be there that day. I had to be with Cap'm John. Not on account of the tournament. On account of Frohman's death. It had bound me somehow to my uncle and I knew that I had to be with him, close to him that day and the next and the next until time and experience might slowly unite us again as child and man, restore our vast small world of inter-

dependence which the death of a negro had divided as with a wall of silence. Because his eyes were stronger than mine, Cap'm John's: seeing far out beyond that point where Frohman's eyes had stopped, and not coming back. And I had to have those eyes back, close to me again, to center now and then their warmth, their scrutiny, their puzzlement upon mine, and I wanted to hear once more the voice going beyond me — scouting out into the world of his experience and then returning to say, 'Well what do you think of this, now,' or 'What do you think of that.' And then we would be once more like two people necessary to each other . . . It has taken me so long to understand my first death, the death of Frohman. And now I wish that we were back the way we were, Cap'm John and I; but we never can be. Too much has died; the wall of silence has gone too high.

So I was there that day. I was alone in the sun outside of the caddy house when I learned; when I heard their voices. I was unraveling the core of a golf ball and thinking about Frohman and wishing that my father too were alive to help me face fear and sadness and a world full of harder boys who were not a prey to their stockings, whose stockings had not become a conscious obsession of fear, a measure of courage or cowardice, a challenge or an admission. But mostly I was just miserable and unraveling rubber when I heard their voices, rich, guttural, quarrelsome, with the sourceless flow and uncontrol of bubbling mush. When I heard the first voice say, 'Shure. Cahy that bag and sign your dead warran'! That boy a fool to cahy that bag, man, shure.'

And the second voice: 'Better be him dan me. Cause de Cap'm jest natchally figure to win dis turment one-up. Jes like it was writ down in de book, cause ain't de Cap'm dooze three-up and two to play in de first turment —'

'And de tanker got ole Snag. Wham!'

'And ain't de Cap'm dooze two-up and one to play in de second turment —'

'And de split bullet found ole Frohman. Wham!'

And then a third and a fourth voice together with the other two in soft, outrageous babbling, in ceaseless turmoil and harangue with the noise that irritable chickens make, the total, the absolute, the utter conviction of sound, 'Ole hawd-haided boy. Shure, man, de Cap'm gwi be lookin down Mister Ginny thoat on number eighteen green and then where is you at?'

'An didn' ole Frohman has that dream about passin wid de dices three times, and didn' de dream book say mind out where you walks and git down on de number three?'

'Cap'm gi'ing ole Frohman a fawty-dollar sen'-over. Boy, how come you don't gawn home and save de Cap'm money —' And then Cap'm John's voice calling, and the swift silence within the caddy house.

'Hopper? Where's my boy? Come on here, son, and bring my bag.'

He came out slowly, with the red bell-hop's cap on his saint-like head, down-looking, miserable, as if he were sick, stopping once to kick something with his long thin foot. Then he said quietly, 'Yas suh, Cap'm. Here I'm is.' Inside the caddy house the dark eyes with the pale china irises watched him go, like the eyes of animals in a cave.

And so there was a gallery of negroes too — a forlorn, downcast, stringy lot, following at a safe distance, not talking.

I don't remember much about that game. We must have made a strange procession forging along with the deliberation of priests and acolytes, with Hopper Bell looking like a walking advertisement for a Georgia Springs hotel, and the trailing negroes and big Cap'm John and Mr. Guernsey and the other negro.

I remember chasing along behind, running often and bumping into them as if I were blind, and being spoken to, and then I remember Hopper Bell's thin, agonized, up-gazing face beneath the red monkey cap watching the flight of the ball with rushing eyes and then I was praying that Cap'm John would lose and it was the next to the last hole and then I thought that I would have to scream for them to stop and with my mouth already shaped for words and my eyes on the crucifixion of Hopper Bell's face and then Mr. Guernsey had teed his ball and was wagging his club and I couldn't scream.

The rest isn't easy to tell, being a composite within an instant of all the terror, the recrimination, the shame that seems to have been childhood: the instant when Cap'm John struck the ball with all the heave of a spike driver; the click that could have been the snapping of a camera within my mind; the slow instant of exaltation, of despair, when Hopper Bell squeezed his eyes beneath his long pale

fingers and the eyes of the other negroes rose and held and sank even as they began to walk away, spent, and when Mr. Guernsey turned to shake hands with Cap'm John (Mr. Guernsey had one ball out of bounds) and Cap'm John turned and Hopper Bell still held his eyes in his Christ-like hand.

'What's the matter with my boy?' Cap'm John said. It was late, nearly dark. There were only the five of us at the tee. 'What's the matter with my boy? What's the matter with you, son? Won't somebody tell me what's the matter with my darry?'

And then Hopper's voice, sudden, thin, gentle: 'Nawsuh, Cap'm suh. Ain't nothin. Wham, Cap'm Jawn suh. Wham, Cap'm!' on an ascending wire of sound.

He thought that I was congratulating him, at first. At first he just thought that I had gone out of control, or maybe he thought that I was trying to fly. It was just that I had to say it then and so maybe I did run headlong into him, leap into him. He caught me rather handily. I remember his embarrassment and the touch of foolish mirth as if some ladies' lingerie had blown into his face and then I was telling him and choking and we were sitting on the green mound and the others had walked away, leaving us alone in the mist that had begun to rise with evening. He listened — quiet, kind, massive.

'Fear, you know,' he said. 'It is a very real thing . . . Only the truly young in the world have the wisdom to be afraid. Someday you will understand this; that most people on earth are born old and heedless and unafraid.' (This was in 1914.) 'I am glad you told me,' he said finally. 'I care less for the game of golf than I do for my caddy's face. Come along, now, and we'll straighten him out.'

Frohman's funeral was on the following day and my uncle, Cap'm John Bell, gave him that.

It was fine. Frohman would have been mighty proud to see himself riding in the polished black wagon behind the negro with the cotton gloves and the opera hat. And to have seen the negroes. There must have been a hundred of them who came, appeared, as if out of nowhere, with the definite pomp of people invited to a party, and dressed for the occasion. And then the band! Cap'm John gave him that, too.

So things were a little better that day. Frohman lived out near

the New Basin Canal and the railroad tracks, and just the right distance from the sad little picket field of wood and concrete markers that was to be his stopping-off place until some later city ordinance should shunt his dark dust elsewhere in the great anonymity — so we walked; we were a parade. Things were better.

First there was the square black wagon with the screened windows and the carved circus scrollwork, then the six piece band, then Cap'm John and I, and then the negroes. I remember looking back as we turned the corner with the band taking the high notes of 'Tiger Rag,' their dazzling clarinets and trombones aimed at the sky, shimmering, and I could see all the curled palms swinging in unison with a cake-walk swagger, and the ten or fifteen negroes in bandmasters' uniforms (a kind of outlandish negro improvisation from the outlandish Caucasian habits of Shriners, Elks, Masons, and the Royal Order of St. James, only made of cheap materials; they were an organization) with the black velvet banner and the white cotton gloves. I remember the identical curl of each pair of the white cotton gloves — and the way they lifted their feet: high and slithering as if missing imaginary eggs. It was fine. We must have been grand as we rounded the turn skirting the New Basin Canal on Frohman's march to glory. Even Cap'm John swaggered a little.

'This is better,' he said. 'I should have my prince suit here. It is remarkable what Providence directs their feet while they aim those horns at heaven. Frohman must be enjoying this,' and we sashayed around the turn onto the dry mud street to glory . . .

And so we buried Frohman. Cap'm John was splendid.

And that afternoon too we had our first ride on the new *Martha R. Bell*. She is still in service, small and tough and jovial, with a decided swagger of her own on the turns. Somehow I know that she will live just about as long as Cap'm John, and not much longer. I see her now and then. And when we marched out of Frohman's funeral that day, and onto her steep, new deck, he seemed to have stepped out of public life and back into the privacy of himself. The only regret I have ever heard him express concerning his brief sojourn among the gentle was over the winning of his third golf tournament.

Hopper Bell, by the way, is dead.

'Experience, you know. That is the thing. Experience is pain and it is out of pain that we grow.' I remember he said that, that eve-

ning on the way back, hurrying around the great bend in the river, butting our way proudly in the amber afterglow. The gulls were clamoring and moiling over a drifting meal. And then I remember him standing against the evening, looming a little bit in the wheel-house beside me, silent, watching the river. I remember him that way. When I left him that night I thanked him.

GLORY, GLORY, HALLELUJAH^{*}

By MARTHA FOLEY

(From *Story*)

GO DOWN, Moses, into Egypt land, and tell old Pharaoh, let my people go-o-o!

The voices of the choir from the Negro college poured the song into the school assembly hall, filling the great room until it seemed to burst with music and pain. Tears ran down Emily's cheeks.

'Oh, God, I will do something for the colored people,' she promised. 'I will! I will!'

Until that day when the Negroes came to her school to sing for the pupils, the Civil War to Emily had been just another war in the history books like the American Revolution and the War of the Roses and the French and Indian Wars. She had heard her grandfather tell, of course, of how he had been left for dead three days on the battlefield of Vicksburg until the Sisters of Charity came and found him. Ever since, though he was a Protestant, he would never let any Sisters who came to the door of his house asking for alms be turned away without something. He had always to wear a beard to conceal the two little holes in his face where a bullet had entered one cheek and passed out through the other.

And Emily had seen in Boston the statue to Wendell Phillips and heard the story of how he had gone to the support of William Lloyd Garrison when the editor of *The Abolitionist* was being dragged through the streets by an angry mob because of his stand against slavery. And she had wept over little Eva and Uncle Tom and Liza in 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' But the Negro question was as remote, otherwise, as the war between the Greeks and the Trojans over Helen of Troy, more so, even, since she had left American history behind in school and was now studying Greek history.

Then, a few days before school was to close for the summer, the Negro choir had come to sing for the pupils. Emily had never cared for concerts very much because there was nothing to eat at them. If

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you got all dressed up and went downtown to see a play, you could always take a small box of chocolates into the theater. But at concerts you were supposed to sit perfectly still and not make a noise opening a candy box and rustling all the crackling paper wrappers. There was always something lacking at a concert even if you knew you were going to have afterward a whipped cream chocolate walnut fudge marshmallow sundae.

After the recital of spirituals by the Negro choir, though, Emily would have been ashamed to eat anything. She wanted to go off in a corner by herself and cry, instead of going back to algebra class. The quartet had sung, 'Deep River,' 'Were You There When They Crucified My Lord,' 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,' 'Gonna Walk All Over God's Heaven,' and finally, because they were in Boston, the home of Julia Ward Howe, its author, they had sung, 'Glory, Glory, Hallelujah,' with its magnificent lines which suddenly to Emily, as the black men sang them became so much more than words, 'Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord, He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored . . . His truth is marching on!'

Red-eyes and still shaking, Emily had gone with the other members of her class to the algebra session which followed the recital. She knew only too well how terrible she looked when she cried, with her round face swollen and her blue eyes all squinted up and her yellow hair in strings, but she couldn't help it. Equations meant even less to her than they usually did. All she could think of was the terrible things that had been done by her race to another because its skin was a different color.

Even while Mr. Dodge, the algebra teacher, was rebuking her for not being able to answer a question, Emily was saying in her mind, 'Oh, I hope some day to be able to make up to those poor people for all they have suffered!'

She thought about it a whole lot again before she went to sleep that night, singing over to herself some of the spirituals in a low voice. She was afraid to sing in a loud voice lest her brothers might hear her. They had made fun of her voice ever since she was excused from singing class on the ground that her voice was a monotone and impossible to train. Since then she had tried to put what she called 'the trembles' in it that professional singers seemed to have, but her brothers kept on laughing.

The next morning was a Saturday morning and although usually she was very busy on a Saturday morning what with weeding her garden, and ironing her hair ribbons and making up new games for the other girls to play, she still felt dedicated to a great cause, the helping of the colored race.

As she went out on the porch, she found its floor covered with sports pages from the newspapers of the night before. Kit and Peter, her brothers, were sprawled out reading them.

'Baseball!' Emily said scornfully. 'Can't you ever fill your minds with anything more important? Think of all the intelligent and beautiful things that are in the world and you wasting your time on a silly game!'

'It's not baseball,' Kit retorted. 'Even if it was, you wouldn't know anything about it. You can't throw a ball straight, let alone with a wicked curve!'

'No, it isn't baseball, it's fighting,' said Peter, 'another thing girls don't know anything about.'

'Fighting! Ugh!' Emily shuddered. 'Who wants to know about anything so messy! Men ought to be ashamed of themselves, going and fighting when they don't have to! Making their noses bleed! Ugh!'

'Well, this isn't a nose bleed. This is a world's championship fight. There's going to be more than a nosebleed in this fight, you bet!'

'Still, I'd rather read poetry than read about a prize fight!'

'Huh! That's what the Black Shadow better go and do — read poetry after the Leaping Leopard gets through with him. He won't be good for anything else, that nigger won't be!'

'Don't use that word. Say colored man!'

'Oh, colored man, then. Only Chinese are colored, too, and so are Indians. How'd anyone know I was talking about the Black Shadow if I just say colored?'

'Well, he's just as good as anyone else,' Emily insisted.

'Peter didn't say he wasn't,' interrupted Kit. 'He just said he wasn't as good a fighter, colored man or nigger, as the Leaping Leopard!'

'I bet he's as good a fighter. I bet he's a better fighter!' Emily surged with indignation. Right in her own home the colored race was being persecuted! By her own brothers! Go down, Moses, into Egypt land!

'Aw, how do you know? You don't know anything about prize fighting. You don't even like it!'

'I know enough about it to know a colored man can beat a white man any day! What do you think we freed the slaves for?'

'Will you bet on it? Will you bet on it?' yelled Peter.

'Of course I'll bet on it. I'll even bet my Fourth of July dollar on it!'

'Hurray! I'll bet a quarter!' her brother shouted. 'A quarter's not very good odds. They're five to one against the Shadow in the paper. But you don't deserve any better odds — putting up a *dollar* on a bad fighter.'

'You'd better take it back before it's too late, Emily,' warned Kit. 'I tell you the Black Shadow hasn't a chance. Read the papers.'

'I don't care,' said Emily. 'If he's a colored man, I'm going to put my money up on him. I owe it to his race.'

'You'll owe it to me, you mean!' Peter almost jumped up and down in his excitement. 'A whole dollar!'

A dollar was the amount of spending money given to her and each of her brothers every Fourth of July, besides the fireworks and ice cream and other things in which the family as a whole participated. In Boston, the Fourth of July, next to Christmas, was the biggest holiday of the year. Bigger, even than Thanksgiving, important though that was.

Fourth of July for Emily and her brothers always began a week or so before when plans were made for the bonfires that were to be lighted at midnight the Night Before. It was hard to tell which was the most important, the Night Before, or The Fourth itself. The Night Before was the only night in the whole year that the children were promised they could stay up as late as they wanted, instead of going to bed early.

Every year the same conversations preceded the coming of the big night.

'I stayed up last year until ten o'clock before I fell asleep!'

'Aw, that's nothing. I stayed awake until half-past ten!'

'This year I'm going to stay up all night!'

'I'm going to, too. I'm going to see the bonfire at twelve o'clock!'

But always the children's heads were nodding and their eyes were closing long before midnight, no matter how much their owners tried to keep awake for the great midnight celebration.

This July Emily did not take part in the long discussions about staying awake the Night Before. Nor did she worry about whether her father was getting enough rockets and set pieces for the evening display. Usually there was a spirited argument each year as to whether he was getting enough Faces-in-the-Clouds, Battle Ships, and such elaborate set pieces as Washington Crossing the Delaware and Dewey at Manila. Instead Emily buried herself in the sport pages of the newspapers.

It was hard going at first, reading the sports pages. Such expressions as 'He's anybody's setup to knock into a transom' or 'One blow and he landed on a magic carpet into oblivion' were baffling to say the least. But after a while Emily could read 'He sank gracefully on to the seat of his panties while his Waterloo turned away and strolled nonchalantly to a neutral corner' and understand that it meant what had happened to the Black Shadow in an earlier fight.

Emily was very indignant at the sports writers. They kept saying that the fight between the Black Shadow and the Leaping Leopard was going to be a murder, a slaughter, a St. Bartholomew's Eve, a shambles, as though they actually liked to see people hurt in a prize fight. She went to sleep every night thinking about the fight and once she dreamed that the Black Shadow, like poor Liza, was being pursued across the ice floes by bloodhounds with boxing gloves on their feet.

There were many arguments between her and her brothers.

'Gosh! The Black Shadow must be an awful sissy to have a girl sticking up for him the way you do! What do girls know about prize fighting anyway?'

'I guess I know as much about prize fighting as you do!' answered Emily. 'I guess I didn't pull Murray Newton's hair that day he was fighting with you! And what made him stop hitting you? Your lying there on the ground or my pulling his hair?'

'Aw — w! That doesn't count. That wasn't a real prize fight with Marquis of Queensbury rules and referees and seconds and sponges and everything.'

'Well, I bet if I pulled the Leopard's hair while he was hitting the Black Shadow, I could help win the fight!'

'Ha! Ha! As if they'd even let you into the ring!'

As it got nearer the day of the fight, Emily became really worried. Everyone seemed to be against the colored fighter. After she fin-

ished reading the newspapers, in the hour between supper and bedtime, she would sit in the swing in a quiet corner of the porch wondering what she could do to help him.

Sometimes she imagined that just as the Black Shadow was being knocked down for the third and last time, she stood up in one corner of the great stadium where the fight was being held and sang as loudly as she could, 'Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord, He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored!' and that the Black Shadow looked up with light and fire in his face and biffed, *biffed* the Leaping Leopard into unconsciousness while the whole crowd roared.

Again Emily thought she might write a letter to the Leaping Leopard telling him that he should be ashamed of himself picking on a colored man. And that last thought gave her an idea. She would write the Black Shadow himself.

She went up to the small desk in her own room and wrote carefully in her square little backhand, 'Dear Black Shadow, the granddaughter of a Civil War veteran is praying for you. I hope you win because your race has suffered so much and the songs you made in your suffering are the most beautiful I have ever heard.'

Emily didn't know the Black Shadow's address so she sent it to him care of the stadium in Chicago where the fight was to be held.

A day or so later she was playing inside the gate of her garden when the postman came down the road.

'A letter for you, Emily,' he said and handed her a lavender envelope. Inside was actually an answer from the Black Shadow!

'Dear little white girl,' he said. 'Thank you for your letter. I am glad to know that the granddaughter of one of the brave men who fought to free my people is praying for me to win. Now I am going to tell you what I am going to do with your letter. I am going to put it inside the boxing glove on my right hand. May it give me strength! Please keep praying for me. Sincerely yours, Henry Theophrastus Sully.'

Emily couldn't believe at first that the letter was from the Black Shadow. Henry Theophrastus Sully. That must be the Shadow's real name. Weren't sport writers funny people? Making up names for prize fighters when they already had perfectly good names of their own! And didn't prize fighters use pretty colors for their

letters? Lavender! It was the first lavender letter paper she had ever seen.

She ran right away to show the Black Shadow's letter to her brothers. That was a mistake because they told her mother about it. Not that they meant to carry tales but because they were so utterly amazed that their sister should be corresponding with a prize fighter.

Emily's mother was very angry.

'Andrew,' she said to Emily's father, when he came home from the office in the afternoon. 'What do you think Emily has done now?'

Her father, as usual, was reading a book and didn't want to be disturbed.

'What has she done?' he asked.

'Written a letter to a prize fighter. A colored one!'

'I don't understand.'

'Of course, you don't. Neither do I. Put that book down and listen to me for one minute.'

'Yes, Margaret.' He put the book reluctantly down but kept one finger between the pages marking the place where he was reading, while he looked with quiet gray eyes at his wife.

'Yes, Margaret,' he said again.

'Well,' his wife sighed. 'Emily wrote a letter to this perfectly strange prize fighter. There's going to be some sort of a championship fight between a white man and a colored man in Chicago on the Fourth of July and Emily had an argument with her brothers about it. She took the part of the colored man.'

'Why?'

'Why? I don't know. I never know why she does some of the things she does. Why does she go mooning around in corners half the time thinking up fantastic things to do? Why does she make the children in the neighborhood play all the strange games she does — about fairies and jungle hunts and being marooned on a desert island and lost in the snow at the North Pole? When I was a child, dolls, and jackstones and hopscotch were good enough for me. It must be your influence on Emily.'

'I know, Margaret. You've told me about my influence before. I want to hear about this letter to the colored prize fighter.'

'Well, read it then.'

Unwillingly her father took his finger from between the pages of the book to reach for the sheet of lavender note paper and read the letter down to the signature of Henry Theophrastus Sully.

'Theophrastus?' he said. 'That is very interesting. You know Margaret, it really is amazing the influence of Greek culture upon the Negroes of America when they will name a child Theophrastus. Just as I have always considered it amazing that so little is really known of the life of Theophrastus. No one is sure of the year he was born although it generally is put around 287 B.C., and no one knows when he died yet his philosophical writings —'

'Andrew!' Her mother was almost screaming. 'Andrew! *Will* you listen to me! I am not talking about Greek philosophers! I am talking about a Negro prize fighter out in Chicago. Our Emily wrote him a letter!'

'Oh, yes. Emily, come here to me.'

Emily crossed the room and stood in front of her father. He was a doctor and he had the look on his face he always had when someone else told him he should be cross with her. It was not at all as bad a look as he could have when he really was cross, as when he didn't like some of the marks on her report card.

'Emily, why did you write a letter to this Greek prize fighter?'

'He isn't Greek, papa. He's colored.'

'Oh, yes, colored then. Why did you write him?'

'Because we freed the slaves.'

'I see. Don't you suppose he knew the slaves were freed too?'

'Yes, but —' Emily was a little embarrassed, 'but I wanted to let him know that — well, you see the way I felt was like the song, "Go down, Moses, into Egypt Land and tell old Pharaoh, let my people go."'

'I see. I am glad to hear that you are interested in Pharaoh who —'

'Andrew!' Her mother broke in frantically, 'If this place isn't a madhouse when you and Emily start talking! I ask you again, will you please get back to the subject and leave the Greeks and Egyptians out of it and punish your daughter for the terrible thing she has done!'

'Just a minute, Margaret. I was getting around to it. Emily, you must never write a letter to a stranger again. It is not only in bad taste. It is dangerous. We do not know what kind of a man this

Greek — er — colored prize fighter might be. I am glad to know of course that my little girl hasn't the silly race prejudices some people have. But you must not write a strange man again. Promise me.'

'Yes. I promise.'

Emily was relieved. She might have been really punished. Desserts taken away from her for a week. Or her spending money, or something like that.

The lavender letter though was taken from her. Even so, her mother couldn't take away the knowledge that on the Fourth of July in a great stadium in Chicago, the Black Shadow was going to carry her letter in his glove. Even her brothers were impressed although they wouldn't admit the colored fighter had any chance at all of winning. They were forbidden to say anything about it to the other children in the neighborhood.

'Oh, if it once gets in the newspapers that Emily wrote a letter to a colored prize fighter, your father's practice will be ruined. As if he would care! His mind is so in the clouds!'

The Night Before the Fourth there was the usual excitement with the children spending most of the afternoon down the road by the field where the big boys were gathering wood for the midnight bonfire. And before supper Emily and her brothers were washed and changed into clean clothes for the evening since they were going to stay up to see it. And by ten o'clock Emily and her brothers were so weary that they made no protest when they were led off to bed.

The morning of the Fourth was soft and fair. Emily was awakened by her father setting off a whole bunch of firecrackers in the garden near the windows of her room and those of her brothers. Bang! Bang! Bang! She jumped out of bed and rushed to the window. There was her father ready to set off another bunch with her mother watching patiently and saying something about being safe and sane. Beside him was a whole pile of fireworks.

'Wheel!' her father shouted when he saw Emily. 'It's the Fourth of July!'

Emily was so excited by all the noise she almost forgot that this was a very special Fourth of July for her. She threw on her underclothes, put on her favorite summer dress, a white Swiss with little red dots all over it and red ribbons running through the beading around the neck and around the cuffs of the little short puff sleeves,

her black patent leather sandals and white socks, and rushed down into the garden.

The fight was to be in the afternoon. So Emily tried to concentrate on the fireworks. It was not too hard. Her father had bought some new kinds this year. Little coils that released snakes, pin-wheels that went off in the day time as well as at night, balls that burst open with a crack and released tiny American flags and four sizes of firecrackers, midget, ladies', ordinary and big. There were no giant firecrackers, to her brothers' great disappointment. Every year they asked their father to get some but he always said they were too dangerous, and that the dealers who bootlegged them against the law should be prosecuted. The ordinaries, though, made a lot of noise when they were set off inside a can.

In the gardens all around them other firecrackers could be heard going off and far away, down in the harbor, the salutes of some navy boats. By noontime there was a sprinkling of bits of red paper all over the gravel walks and even in the flower beds of Emily's garden.

Then there was Fourth of July dinner. The long silver platter with a small whole boiled salmon resting on it, firm and pink and little curls of lettuce filled with mayonnaise around it, green peas and potato chips, and fruit lemonade with raspberries for the children to drink while the grownups had wine, and for dessert golden cake and big dishes of homemade vanilla ice cream. Fourth of July dinners in Boston were always the same and every Thanksgiving Emily wondered how she could ever think of salmon and green peas as interesting, and every Fourth of July she thought how terrible it would be to have a great big hot turkey on such a warm day, and how lovely and cool cold salmon could be with its blessing of mayonnaise.

After dinner, everybody sat around on the porch quietly for a while talking and waiting for the hot noon sun to lessen. At half-past two, Emily's brother shouted 'Only half an hour and then the fight begins!' Which made Emily remember what she had to do. So she went back up to her bedroom and knelt down beside the bed where the white spread had been pulled so tight and neat and said, 'Dear God. Please, please, help the Black Shadow to win.' And after she had said her prayer, she went and sat in her armchair and sang very softly so that her family, and especially her mother, wouldn't hear her, 'Glory, Glory, Hallelujah!' all the way through.

She wondered how long the fight would last and if perhaps she shouldn't keep on singing the song over and over again. Then she thought that it was probably such a good song one didn't have to sing it more than once. So she said one more prayer and went down to the garden before she was missed.

Two hours later newsboys were running down the street.

'Extra! Extra! Black Shadow Knocks Out Leaping Leopard in First Round! Extra! Extra!'

Emily wasn't at all surprised. Her brothers were terribly upset. Although of course they had all kinds of excuses for their man. Dope in his coffee. Mustn't have been fit. Bone fractured in his hand at last fight. But Emily knew better.

The newspapers spoke of the Black Shadow's phenomenal rise to victory. Of the extraordinary power in his right fist. Blows that sent the Leaping Leopard sprawling to the mat with almost miraculous swiftness. It was a mystery what could have given such force to those right blows. But it was no mystery to Emily. Glory, Glory, Hallelujah!

She felt so happy about it that she even told her brother, she wouldn't take all of his bet money, only fifteen cents.

CHAINS*

By ELMA GODCHAUX

(From *The Southern Review*)

LURIE WEBRE often walked along the *batture*. Sometimes he spent more than two hours there weaving in and out among the willows or sometimes just standing still looking at the river. The grass on the levee was burned the color of dry pin-oak leaves. Skinny cows and mules bunched under the shade of the trees, motionless except for their tails swinging at the bugs and horseflies. The willows and cypresses crowded together making good places to hide from the sun. Sometimes Lurie sat on a stump and kicked the pieces of dead wood at his feet to powder and watched the black ants run; the ants were fat as if they all carried eggs. Sometimes Lurie just sat and watched the river. He could see how fast it had fallen since the June rise and it was still falling. He could see the old water line and the grass above it dried and stiff as though water had never covered it. He could see across the river just as easy, the trees strung out along that *batture*. He could see the sugarhouse across the river. Seemed as if the heat brought everything close. The smokestacks and houses and trees across the river looked close enough to touch. Everything was still, like a painted picture. Nothing ever happened. Up above near where the river curved he could see the heavy brick stacks of the nigger prison at Angola. A man could get across easy swimming, Lurie thought; he knew a man could if he let himself go with the current. For a minute he imagined himself runaway. Today there was a cool and gentle mercy in the river. He could feel the water at his armpits and rilling between his toes. He felt the movement of her slow swells against his body. Under her brown skin dove-like palpitations moved. He got up grinning sheepishly. Some summer, God knows, she might tempt him. He was a fool. He turned his back. And picked his way over the trash of roots and dead leaves and rotted wood. He was very thin; his body seemed shriveled under his shirt and overall. He climbed the levee and stood for a minute on the

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summit picked out against the hazy blue sky. For the minute he stood there he seemed to stand against the sky. He could see the store gallery filled with men. They were chewing tobacco and jabbering. Every evening after their work was done they sat like that, chewing and jabbering. Lurie raised his head suddenly and marched towards the store. He was thinking fiercely to himself that he wasn't chained. He was as free as any of them. He had as much right as any of them to sit there chewing and jabbering. With his head high and his face flushed the least bit he marched straight to the store.

He walked up and sat on the gallery's lowest step. The talk hushed. He hated the talk hushing like that. But he pushed himself in securely and swept his eyes over the men. He wished the talk would go on. But everybody was quiet. The buzz of insects suddenly rose. A nigger in the store laughed and his laugh came out the door and seemed to poise for a long time on the dull air. The men looked at Lurie and chewed their tobacco hunks slowly and spat out to the road.

Then John Boudreaux cleared his throat and his voice breaking the stillness was like the sudden sound of something solid splashing into dead-quiet water. 'Why you don't drain your swamp, Lurie, and raise cane on shares like we all do?'

Lurie answered flushing, 'One of these days I'm going to drain it.' His voice was heavy and rough.

'You been saying that a long time,' Maxie Webre, Lurie's cousin, drawled, 'you ought to be doing it soon, Lurie. It ain't natural or right living on stilts up here in the cane country like you was a fisherman down on the Lake front.'

'No good's ever going to come of it,' Boudreaux put in angrily. 'Sho'.'

'Sho' ain't,' another man echoed.

'You never do nothing,' Maxie continued, 'you're sho' one lazy Cajin, Lurie.'

The men laughed. Lurie sat forward watching some dust from the road run through his fingers. The laughs hit against his face like slaps, making it burn.

'Lurie's pretty busy on the *batture* most of the time,' Paul Morelle joked. 'What you got on the *batture*, Lurie? You got a woman hid in the willows down there?'

The men laughed again. 'Bet he has,' somebody laughed. 'Sho'.'

'Come on, Lurie, ain't you?'

'The *batture* ain't nothing to visit alone and you ain't after driftwood for kindling these days.'

Lurie tried to laugh too. He ducked his head and giggled. He stood up at last and looked down the road. 'I reckon I better be getting home.' He hesitated. 'Well, so long.'

He turned away. The men's eyes followed him. He tried to pretend he didn't feel those eyes on him. He spat in the dust and climbed the levee. It was nobody's business what he did on the *batture*. He spat again. He wished he could sit and jabber.

In front of him the sun was swollen and red. The waters of the river seemed to burn. The cane leaves glinted brazenly. A couple of cows passed waddling with their bags full and they shone under the heavy red hand of the sun. Niggers too slouching along. Not a breath stirred the suspended glow. Children dribbled from the houses along the way onto the steps and the yards. Lurie wiped the sweat from his face and opposite his own house turned and went slantways down the levee with his body stiffened, holding back against the stiff run of the slope. He could see all about him the spread of Mr. Labidet's cane. He stepped on to the raised plank walk that led to his door. Beneath him and all about the house was an island of swamp ground covered with wild hyacinths. The swamp seemed to take the little man and swallow him. The hyacinths bunched tightly and made what looked like solid ground of green. Here and there the sharp points of iris leaves pierced. Walking above it Lurie could see the earth between the leaves was caking in the dry heat. Bad weather for sugarcane, Lurie thought; summers ought to be hot but wet. A couple of turkey-buzzards and then more dropped down behind Lurie's house. Lurie could hear them flop down on to the ground after something dead in the leaves, a rabbit or a field rat. He looked about him. His sunken ground was always the first thing to fall away into darkness. A black hand seemed to press down on the swamp and on him too. The heaviness clamped down on his heart. It made a wall round him smooth and black. He couldn't see the house next door where Dena Larue lived; he lost the stretch of cane; he couldn't see nothing. He moved impatiently hurrying along the walk. The swamp wasn't nothing to

chain a man down. He went on into the house and over the uncovered passageway to the shed where he did his cooking. He sat down at the table with a plate of cold grits and bacon. He never took much time cooking. He bent low over his plate, but not paying attention to the food, thinking. He imagined how his swamp would look covered with cane. His cane would spread evenly, continuing the rows of the other men. Nobody but himself and Hypolite Larue and Mr. Labidet would know where his fields ended and where Larue's and Mr. Labidet's took up. But he felt the iron chain of the swamp round his neck was unbreakable. He ate quickly, shoveling up the grits in big spoonfuls. A mosquito-hawk flew into the room and was whirring and bumping against the window sill. The heat hugged the shed, filling the room with a motionless pressure. Sweat dyed the shirt Lurie wore and ran down his cheeks. When he was finished eating he moved over to the sink and washed his plate and a couple of pots. Then he took up the bucket of kitchen slop and walked out the door with it, going across the swamp.

The big moon was faint in a sky still lit by the sunken sun. Lurie saw two niggers standing on the levee. They disappeared suddenly going down the slope to the *bathure*. At night the niggers hid among the trees on the *bathure* and made love. White folks too. Lurie's heart swung heavily. He threw the slop from his bucket into the pen for Tony Cascio's pigs. The pigs came running and grunted, gobbling the stuff. Lurie moved away, returning the way he had come across the swamp. His feet rattled the dry leaves and raised the dust. Darkness was like a contagion spreading from the swamp. But the moon had brightened and taken firmness and shape. It seemed to swing very low just above Dena's gate. And as Lurie looked, Dena was standing there lit from head to foot. He could see the lines of her body emphasized by the light from the moon. He stopped. And put his bucket down. She stood there enormous and spotlighted as if she were raised on a stage with the world about her falling away in darkness. Lurie's mouth hung open. Silence humming with insects suspended between them. Then while he stood she turned and saw him.

Her full voice swung out to him across the swamp. 'Hello, Lurie. I come out, me, to see if I can't get a breath of air.' He stood stupidly catching the sound of her voice and watching her. 'You ain't bogged in the hyacinths, are you,' she laughed.

He moved towards her, dragging his feet and wiping his hands off inside his pockets.

'Our sheet-iron roof makes our house hot as a oven,' she continued.

He could see her firm breasts move as she breathed and her breath pushed against his cheeks. He stood before her, not speaking.

He made her feel uncomfortable, not saying a word, 'Well, Lurie.' She cleared her throat. 'Ain't you begun draining yet?' She was always teasing him.

He looked at her earnestly. 'No, but it's easy enough to drain. All you have to do is fill in a little and cut quarter drains the same as you do sugar land.'

'Whyn't you do it?'

'I'm going to do it.'

'I reckon it costs money.'

'Oh not much,' he assured her in his masculine voice.

'You're always talking about draining,' she said, 'but you never do nothing.'

'After this grinding,' he interrupted quickly, 'I'm going to do something.' His thin serious face thrust towards her, very white, washed with sweat. But her head was raised. He couldn't see her eyes. She looked at something beyond him. He wanted to reach her.

Then above his head her voice suddenly belled, 'Oh hello.'

Lurie jumped. A hand fell on his shoulder and Maxie's voice sounded close to his ear. 'Well, if it ain't little Lurie.' The blood burned Lurie's face. 'What you all jabbering about?'

'Lurie's swamp,' Dena explained.

Lurie coughed.

'Speaking of draining, hunh,' Maxie asked with laughs in his voice.

'I'm going to drain,' Lurie cried.

'You got to fill in plenty,' Maxie observed. 'Well,' he broke off, 'come on, Dena.'

They moved off together quickly, the darkness mingling their two figures.

Then Dena called back, 'So long, Lurie.'

Lurie swallowed. 'So long.'

He heard them in the dry grass going up the levee. He felt hol-

low, like an old man. He licked his thin lips. Maxie thought he knew everything. He made Dena think it too. Lurie knew there were lots of secret things nobody knew, neither Maxie or Boudreaux. Lurie's feet dragged along the walk. He couldn't make headway against the darkness. It was like Dena's presence so full of life it pushed aside his own. He felt helpless. There was something everlasting about these things, as everlasting as this swamp that had always been, a dark interruption in the even sweep of the cane. When the hyacinths bloomed, the pale flowers did not erase the desolation that hovered over the sunken ground. When Lurie was a child he used to give the place a wide berth. But now it had caught him. The swamp was his. His father had left it to him. Sometimes he got to thinking he was the swamp's. He ducked his head entering his doorway. A big deer's antler was nailed above it. He wished folks could have heard the strong bang of his gun that had dropped the deer. Sometimes little men did big things. Dena and Maxie were on the *batture*. Maxie carried Dena off easy. Maxie was always doing something, talking at the store or making grinding at Labidet's sugarhouse or working his own fields, plowing or planting or laying by. He kept busy all the time. Lurie pouted and thought of himself and his father, who had bought this swamp off a nigger and was going to plant the low ground in rice and hadn't ever done it.

Lurie didn't light the lamp on the table. He dragged his cot from the hot wall between the two doors where there might be a draft. He got into bed naked and drew the sheet over him. He squashed a mosquito on his forehead. The voice of Tony Cascio's wife came to him faintly. It was far away. He closed his eyes. He held Dena's hand. A pulse beat in her hand; it beat like a bird's excited heart. Big blobs of sweat stood up on his pale forehead and his body lying irregularly on the bed with the sheet thrown back looked as if it had been hurled down furiously. But he slept with his lips spread in a smile.

In summers Lurie never had anything much to do. The sugarhouse was closed and Lurie had plenty of time to think. He fed Tony Cascio's shoats and did odd jobs for the dago. But he had plenty of time on his hands. He walked along the top of the levee now with his hands in his pockets, thinking. It was after midday and a hard glare was settled down on the land. The fat sides of the

levee looked white. Dust mingled with the bright haze and covered everything, houses, fence rails, cane leaves. The dust's hot dry taste was always in Lurie's mouth. He could feel the sweat running down inside his loose shirt and trousers. Tony Cascio was in his yard hitching his horse. His littlest kid sat on the step hugging a coon. The Cascios kept all kinds of animals. Their yard was all cluttered up with chickens and a couple of goats and pigs. Lurie passed a couple of niggers sitting below him on the fence beside the road doing nothing. They looked calm and comfortable. Niggers were like that; they didn't like to worry. Lurie liked niggers. Before he came to the store he ducked down the levee. He wound in and out among the trees until he stood beside the river. He stood with his legs spread watching it. He watched steadfastly. His eyes went up and down it. It lapped lazily at his feet, winding slowly past the solid walls of Angola prison and past all the places Lurie knew. He sat down at last on a cypress stump, took out his pocket knife, and began whittling a stick. He wished he could do something. He didn't like to whittle all day. He looked at the river seeking something; he didn't know what. Sometimes he shook his head. Sometimes he spat as if getting ready to say something. One night, he thought, he ought to come out and take a bath in the river naked. It would be heathen to do that he knew. But he bet it would be nice, the heavy cool water wrapping round him. He stopped whittling and with his elbows on his knees squinted out over the river. He wished it would take him away. When he heard somebody walking on the levee he lifted his head and listened. He didn't want anybody to see him. He ought not to be sitting by himself like this doing nothing but whittling and studying. He kept thinking he had to have considerable money to drain his swamp. He knew he was a good man in the sugarhouse grinding; he was worth some money to Mr. Labidet. But Mr. Labidet said money didn't grow on trees. That was exactly what Mr. Labidet had said. Lurie remembered every word. Mr. Labidet was painting his mule stable and Lurie found him in the mule yard. Some niggers were on ladders and with their arms spread painting the wall they looked as if they were stretched on crosses. Lurie remembered the manure pile in the yard and the flies swarming above it. Lurie had coughed and wiped the sweat off his face and watched Mr. Labidet and not known how to begin. He coughed again and stumbled over his

words. He wanted to raise cane on shares like the other men did. If his wages were a little higher he could drain his swamp. Could Mr. Labidet raise him? He was a good man at the centrifugals. Would Mr. Labidet raise him? 'But, Lurie,' Mr. Labidet said, 'money don't grow on trees. Don't you know we don't need any more land in cane? Raising cane in Louisiana is too expensive. You men don't use your heads. That's why you all never get on. Money don't grow on the trees.' That's why Lurie didn't get on. Money didn't grow on trees. The river lapped at Lurie's feet. Money don't grow on trees. Leaves are on the trees. Not money, Lurie. God, he wished the river would hush. When he had left Labidet's mule stable he had passed Boudreaux's house where by the gate a white rag was tied on a pole stuck into the roadside. Zillah Boudreaux was going to have a baby and the white rag was the signal for the doctor. That flag, Lurie felt, was the sign of John Boudreaux's manhood. It would never fly for him. He couldn't do nothing. He hung round all summer and fed the dago's pigs and sat whittling by the river like a nigger. He felt hollow, emptied of manhood. His heart swung in the empty cavity of his body. No, the flag would never fly for him. But it would for Dena. And in the hot weather Dena would sit in the open doorway nursing her baby. When the baby was full she would spread her knees and lay it across her lap. When it fretted she would pat it and nestle it at her breast again, and Lurie would hear the little thing sucking. It finished and Dena bent over the child before her dress was hooked and her full white breast hung loose for the minute she bent and tended to it. Lurie felt filled with his feelings. Blood throbbed in his head and cheeks. He was a good man at the centrifugals; he knew he was. Mr. Labidet forgot. He only remembered money didn't grow on . . . Oh shut up about that. A man at the centrifugals had to be strong to shove the door against the heavy flow of the sugar. Lurie didn't look strong. But he was. Nobody could see his strength. The hot sugar was browner than the river and moved faster. The river moved so slowly you had to watch it before you noticed its motion. Then you saw it sliding away. Lurie felt himself going with it, slipping by all the things he knew surrounded by the broad sheet of its protection. He sat for a long time leaning on his elbows, holding the knife and the whittled stick and feeling the water's cool stroking. He didn't know what time it was. The mosquitoes were right bad.

Cows were moving by him up the levee. He felt his empty stomach. But he wasn't lonesome. He grinned; he was lazy as a nigger. Then he heard noises, a horse galloping and some men's voices calling out. He got up. And listened. Then wove his way quickly through the litter of leaves and wood and dung to the levee top. He saw a commotion of horses and people before the store. He hurried down the levee and along the road.

Niggers were standing on the edges of the crowd staring and listening. A nigger on the gallery was leaning on a broom with his eyes big. John Boudreaux stood on the top step. Lurie saw Maxie and men from a good distance away in the crowd. Little Lurie pushed himself among them and got as near the gallery as he could. Nobody noticed him. Folks looked over his head gesturing and talking.

Boudreaux spat a swift jet of tobacco juice past Lurie to the road and wiped his mouth. 'You all with horses get started now,' he called; 'I'll meet you later on with what dogs I can get.'

'I thought you said the prison man brought down dogs,' Maxie called from the road.

'I did say so,' Boudreaux answered, 'but it ain't going to hurt how many dogs we got.'

The niggers' eyes were spreading; they were white; they looked like big marbles. Lurie listened.

'Sho' it ain't going to hurt,' Maxie shot back to Boudreaux.

'Sho' not,' men echoed.

Lurie cleared his throat to speak. But Boudreaux's voice drowned out everything. 'The prison man said he was going to lay back on the edge of the woods near the drainage machine. He's there now I reckon waiting for what men he can get. The nigger's bound to come out the woods sooner or later likely near the drainage machine where he might think he could get in touch with some other nigger.'

'Sho'.'

'Huh-hunh.'

'What,' stammered Lurie, 'what's wrong?'

Maxie grabbed his gaze away.

Lurie tried a nigger standing near him. 'What, what's the matter?'

The nigger made as if he didn't hear the question; he listened to the talk swinging back and forth.

'They sho' he's in the woods back yonder,' somebody asked.

'Sho'. The dogs smelled him.'

'If we all know how to hunt,' explained Boudreaux, 'we can round him out at the drainage machine where the guard is waiting.'

'Sho'.'

'It'll be easy.'

Lurie pushed up the gallery steps to the nigger with the broom; he knew the nigger. 'What's the matter? What's wrong,' he pressed.

'Nigger murderer run off from Angola,' the nigger whispered, 'he in the woods back yonder.' The big white eyes slid away to Maxie who was talking.

'Dust'll muffle the horses' hoofs. That nigger ain't going to know nothing until we got the handcuffs on him.'

'Sho' ain't.'

Laughs broke out. The men moved.

'How much'd you say the reward was?'

'Twenty-five dollars. Twenty-five dollars is plenty enough for a nigger.'

'Sho'.'

'Sho'. That's enough.'

Lurie's eyes were big.

A couple of horses started from the crowd and the men turned in their saddles. 'So long.'

'So long.'

Dust flew up making a thick screen for the riders.

'I'm getting on home so I can get ready,' Maxie announced, 'I wouldn't miss it, me, for nothing, hunting a nigger with dogs. I don't care so much for the reward as hunting the nigger.'

'I reckon I'll be there,' Lurie said suddenly. The words choked him. But he had to say them. This was his chance. He had to go. Maybe he'd catch the nigger.

Maxie who was moving off stopped and grinned. Chuckles rippled over the gallery and on to the road. Lurie dipped his head. 'Whyn't you look for the nigger in your own swamp, Lurie?'

'Oh Lord,' sputtered somebody.

'Yes, why don't you?'

Even the niggers grinned.

'I've hunted before this,' Lurie announced in that stubborn voice of his, 'none of you all ain't hunted more than me.'

'You ought to know that hunting bear and deer or rabbit is different from hunting nigger,' asserted Maxie.

'Sho', everybody agreed, 'that's so.'

'Reckon, me, I can make out with a nigger same as the rest,' Lurie argued.

'Oh you ain't got no horse, Lurie.'

'No. How you going without a horse?'

'Sho'. You can't go.'

Lurie seemed to wilt. His head hung. He wiped his face.

'Well,' Boudreaux began, 'we all better be getting started. The nigger ain't going to sit round waiting.'

The crowd began to spread out and thin. A few of the men made new groups and huddled together talking. A man on horseback turned and laughed towards Lurie.

Lurie walked off. He could hear the talk going on behind his back. He wished he could catch the nigger. God, he wished he could. Twenty-five dollars was a good lot of money. He'd start right off draining. He'd march the nigger to the store. He reckoned they would run a column about it in the parish paper. 'Lurie Webre Catches Nigger Murderer,' it would say, and in smaller letters, 'without a horse Lurie brings in big buck nigger that murdered several nigger field hands.' God. If he only could. But nobody could get back behind to the drainage machine without a horse. He could see the men standing round listening to the way he had caught the nigger; Maxie and Boudreaux were there. Little men could do big things. Maybe he could borrow Tony's horse. The dago never bothered much with what was going on. Lurie hurried. He didn't intend to meet the other men. He was going off alone. A whole bunch of horses would be bound to make some noise. He stopped at Tony's gate. He put his hand on the latch. He stopped dead staring. Tony was under a chinaberry tree settling the saddle on his horse. The scene etched itself sharply on Lurie's sight. He would never forget it. It burned into him like a sharp tragedy, a killing being enacted before his eyes, Tony's kids standing round watching, the littlest one still hugging the coon, and Tony himself reaching for the saddle girth under the horse's belly and tightening it so that he jerked the horse up with the strap. Tony swung himself to the horse's back and came towards Lurie. Lurie didn't move. He stood watching the horse and rider, spellbound, as if he expected some-

thing extraordinary to happen. But nothing did. Cascio called out as he went by. Lurie licked his dry lips and sank down on the side of the levee.

A group of horsemen loped by him, a strong army of horses and men. He didn't raise his head; he stared between his legs at the grass. He wasn't thinking. He was just sitting there lost. Sometimes he raised his hand and slapped at the mosquitoes and a horsefly that kept buzzing about his head. When he looked up he saw the dust settled like a thick scum on the hyacinth leaves. He didn't move. He was chained. Then Dena came out and stood in her yard looking at him. So he got up and started home.

She called to him. 'Hello, Lurie. Ain't you going on the hunt?'

'I don't reckon so,' he answered, 'I been away on business and I ain't ate all day.'

He could hardly see her. A mist swung between his eyes and her. A wagon jolted by and the wagon's noise got between him and Dena. He kept fighting to hold her and his senses kept losing her.

'I wonder who's going to catch the nigger,' she was saying, 'I reckon Maxie will.'

Bright strips of color stretched across the sky where the sun was sinking.

'I'm right scared of the nigger,' Dena went on; 'a nigger murderer, you can't tell what they'll do.'

'He ain't going to do nothing,' Lurie said in his slow rough voice; 'there ain't nothing to be scared of.'

'Well, it's sho' scary,' Dena insisted, 'with all the men away.'

Lurie cleared his throat. 'It ain't a bit. Likely the nigger ain't as bad as he sounds.'

'Anyway I don't feel safe,' she asserted, 'with him around. I sho' hope Maxie catches him.' She paused and swung at the mosquitoes. 'The mosquitoes are eating me up and I reckon you're tired and hongry if you been away all day so I'll say goodnight. Goodnight.' 'Goodnight.'

He moved away. Then stopped and called. 'You don't have to be scared of nothing, Dena.'

She was gone into the house.

He kept on across the swamp. Beyond the gloomy hollow of his ground there were house lights, Tony Cascio's chickens settled in the chinaberry trees making dark lumps along the branches. A dog

barked and a couple of the chicken lumps moved, spreading their wings. Then everything settled again into quietness and that steady buzzing that seemed only the voice of quietness. A big moon was swinging over the levee. Lurie felt the heat coming out of the ground. He was dead-tired.

He lit the lamp and pulled out the bed, went to the kitchen shed and drank a glass of milk. He brought a loaf of bread back to the bedroom and chewed on it while he undressed. Moths and bugs flew about the light. Sometimes a creature landed on the strip of fly-paper hanging from the ceiling. Lurie sat down on the bed, took off his shoes and scratched his toes. He stopped. Listened. His toes stiffened. He stood up listening. Something rustled the hyacinth leaves. He moved to the door. Darkness stretched everywhere and silence. He tried to puncture the darkness and the stillness. Lightning-bugs kept rising and falling and things kept humming. Lurie pushed his head into the darkness. Then he turned from the door, thinking some animal had been hunting in the leaves. He blew out the light and got into bed. He closed his eyes. He might as well sleep. He couldn't do nothing. He kept his eyes shut. He wished his world would slide away. He wished the river would carry him off. God, he wished he could skim away. He wished he wasn't chained. Wished he was sitting at the store, spitting and swapping talk. Wished he could bring the nigger back. God, he wished he could. His closed eyes saw Dena's light go out. He moved. He hoped she wasn't scared. He wished he could shoot the nigger. He heard his gun go off. He wished the men could hear. He wished he could scream so they could hear. He screamed. He screamed again. He felt the agony of the scream constricting his throat. Then the pain eased off him and he was dropping into the nothingness of dreamless sleep. A fly landed on his face. But he didn't know it. Then suddenly he felt himself swing plummet on the string of a noise. The next minute he was awake. He sat up. He was icy cold. He stared and listened. He couldn't hear a thing, just the frogs and crickets singing. His sweat was cold. He heard the noise. It sounded like feet thumping on to the ground from the height of, say, a fence. It came, faint, from Tony Cascio's pig pen. Lurie heard it just there. Then it dropped away into stillness. He slipped out of bed. Put his pants on. No lights showed anywhere. He got his gun from the shelf; he had to stand on a chair to reach it.

He stuffed the cartridges into his pocket and crept out the doorway.

The moon had slid down behind the levee. Lurie cut through the swamp towards Cascio's pig pen, picking his steps so they wouldn't rattle the leaves and loading his gun. He made for the big hackberry tree standing on the edge of the swamp. He peeped round it at the pen. Everywhere quiet. The stillness stretched over the pen where the two old sows were lying against the fence asleep and the boar was nosing some slop. Lurie kept staring into the thin darkness. Earth was quiet as the broad dim arch of sky. Lurie could hear himself breathing. Then he lowered his gun and grinned. He was glad nobody saw him like this, foolishly searching the darkness. He tried to hide his gun behind him as he tiptoed away. He spat, a little sick. He was a fool.

Night was passing into day. The moon was fading out. An old white mule was standing on the levee. It took no notice of Lurie. Lurie went on down the levee to the *batture*. He went slowly with his head hanging thinking he was a fool. He reckoned he'd been dreaming about a noise and there wasn't no noise really. He was nearly to his stump when he knew somebody was watching him. The nigger was sitting with his knees drawn up and his back against the stump. He must have just waked. Lurie raised the gun. And the nigger's eyes were big looking right into the barrel. His mouth hung down.

Whispers came from him. 'Don't shoot, don't shoot, boss.'

Lurie kept the gun pointing and his heart kept beating, choking him with thanks. Moss and twigs were stuck in the nigger's wool and his face was marked with welts and clotted blood.

'Get up,' commanded Lurie, 'and you make a try to escape, I'll shoot you where you stand.'

'Yes sir.' The nigger got up stiffly.

He was a big nigger. His hands hanging by his sides looked swollen. He was almost naked. But Lurie could see part of his pants clinging to him were convict-striped. Lurie trembled. He coughed, choking a little. 'How'd you get here, nigger?'

'On the river, boss.'

Lurie stared at the nigger unbelieving. Then his eyes went to the river and his heart kept praising Jesus. The river was unchaining him like he knew it could. It was as if it were taking him away. Its gentle touch pushed him on. He caught himself up. He was the

same old fool. He was arresting the nigger murderer; he ought to remember that. Folks would be stirring soon. He wanted to wait until folks were in their yards feeding their animals and the men began to straggle back from the woods. He was going to keep the nigger just in front of the gun when he marched him to the store. But nobody was stirring yet. He had to kill time.

'How'd you get here on the *batture*, nigger? I thought you was back yonder in the woods.' God, Lurie thought, he was a big nigger. Folks wouldn't know how Lurie had caught such a big one.

'I ain't never been in the woods,' the nigger was saying, 'I know the woods is the first place they hunts a man. I been in that swamp yonder. I knows folks steers clear of a big old swamp like that one yonder.' The nigger pouted. He watched the gun. 'I was hunting something to eat and resting up,' he went on mournfully, 'before I took to the river again.'

'Wasn't you scared of that swamp,' Lurie asked, killing time.

'No, boss,' the nigger answered, 'I ain't scared of no swamp. I ain't scared of nothing 'cept a gun.'

Lurie steadied the gun.

'It was sho' nice on the river,' the nigger went on in his slow mournful voice, remembering. 'I floated down on sticks and truck. Reckon I was going to be in New Orleans soon. But I got hongry.' His voice fell and died. Then he began again: 'The river sho' was nice lifting me up by the arms and legs. I felt safe like I was in my mamma's lap. It was cool too. When my head got hot I dove it under the water and the river kept toting me away from trouble.'

The nigger's voice was low. Lurie could hardly hear it. But he bet he knew how nice the river felt. Seemed as if he instead of the nigger was floating away. He felt the water soft against him. It had touched the nigger like that. Lurie knew he would kill the man who recalled him from so cool an escape. He felt how his heart would swing a dead weight in his chest while he shot to kill. But the nigger didn't try to harm him. The nigger's heart must be heavy. He stood there studying the river, thinking yesterday he had floated down. He looked like he was about to cry. It was getting late. Lurie had to march him to the store.

'Come on, nigger,' ordered Lurie, 'time to get started. March straight ahead.'

The nigger turned in front of Lurie. They started off. The nigger

went slowly dragging his feet. Lurie kept close to the nigger pointing his gun. They twisted round the trees. A horse loped by on the levee. It struck its hoofs sharply on the path. Lurie looked up. The man on its back was a heavy lump joggled by the horse's motion. Lurie stared. The lump looked sodden, without feelings. Lurie knew he wasn't jerked up and down without will. He was different from that thing on horseback. He moved by himself. He was free. He did what he wanted. He didn't have to listen to every black lump on horseback. He had a mind of his own. That lump was Boudreaux or Maxie. Lurie felt choked. He was full of a burning assurance.

'Wait a minute, nigger.'

The nigger turned. Lurie looked at him. The nigger was his nigger. Nobody couldn't tell him what to do with his nigger. He was a big nigger too.

'Go on,' Lurie cried suddenly, 'go on, nigger, get in the river.'

The nigger stared.

'Go on,' Lurie repeated, 'get in.' He was going to unchain the big nigger. The nigger was going to float away. After the dry yard of Angola prison the river felt cool, Lurie bet. Lurie did what he wanted to do. He was a free man, thank God.

'Don't you hear me, nigger,' he cried; 'get in the river.'

The nigger didn't move. He stared. His eyes bulged; they looked like beads sewed in a doll's head.

'You ain't deaf, are you, nigger? Go on.'

The nigger dropped on his knees. 'Lord Jesus, Lord Jesus, boss, you going to kill me. You going to kill me when my head is bobbing on the water. Lord Jesus, boss. Please.'

'Get in.' Lurie shoved the nigger with the gun. 'Get in the water, you. Make haste. Folks going to see you. Get in, I tell you. Get in.'

The nigger fell on the ground. Lurie pushed him with the muzzle of the gun. The nigger rolled over, over leaves and twigs and dung, bruising himself against stumps. The gun kept nudging him. Over and over. He splashed into the water. He kept his head under.

Lurie could see the waves running above the nigger's body where he was swimming under water. When he came up for air he was far out, nearly in the middle of the stream. Lurie waved. He watched until he couldn't see the nigger any longer. He turned away slowly

— he was smiling — and hunted in the bushes for a place to hide his gun. He stuck it under some branches and covered it with leaves. He didn't want folks joking him for carrying a gun. He patted the branches into place over it. When he walked up the levee he was still smiling and his heart kept beating thanks. He went slowly, a little man looking shriveled under his loose clothes. He carried his head hanging in his usual way. But he didn't feel the same. When men on horseback passed him he raised his head. He was as free as any of them.

THE POET¹

By ALBERT HALPER

(From *The Virginia Quarterly Review*)

IN THE spring of that year a strange young man began coming into my father's grocery. Surely he was a poet, for his eyes were so large and sad. He was tall and gaunt, wore a dark suit which hung from his shoulders, and his pale face was so pinched by hunger that his cheekbones stuck out. And to add to this gloomy ensemble he wore a large black hat which morbidly shaded his brow. His age appeared to be about twenty-three or so. My father, after the first visit of this young man, said to us:

'He must be one of those poets, he looks so hungry.'

At that time I was about ten years old and, though I had taken to scribbling under the influence of several 'wild Westerns,' I had never heard of a poet before. I pressed my father for information, but all I received was a mumbled phrase or two.

'They live in little rooms where they scribble and starve to death.'

These few words, dropping casually from his lips, made a deep impression on me and there loomed in my mind the pale face of the mysterious young man.

The young fellow thereafter came into our store every day and purchased a bottle of milk. He drank it right before us so that he wouldn't have to pay two cents extra for the deposit on the bottle. He bought a large bottle, a quart, and after shaking it a bit from side to side, in order to send the cream at the top to all points inside the bottle, he took off the cap with his finger nails and tilted the bottle up in the air. As his head went back I could see that though the fellow was very young his neck already was growing corded like some of the old men's who came in to buy plug tobacco. I stood there looking at him, watching the milk gurgling down his throat. When he was finished he set the bottle down, wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, and went out.

¹ Copyright, 1936, by the University of Virginia.

Two or three times a week he purchased a five-cent box of crackers, breaking the package open before us and eating the contents with his milk. He would stuff two or three crackers into his mouth at one time, until his sallow cheeks would bulge with the dry particles; then he would take a deep and prolonged swallow. He never spoke to us — outside of asking for milk and crackers — and in a week I was bursting with curiosity.

In a neighborhood of poor working people, where everybody lived in two-storey frame cottages hard by the railroad tracks, such a personage could not long go unnoticed. People began to talk about him and wondered who he was. I followed him home one day and found that he went into Mrs. Foley's rooming house, a dilapidated building flush against the railroad tracks. The old house reared itself above the automatic signal towers and I imagined him lying awake nights, listening to the trains.

I went back to the store and told my father of my findings. Upon hearing that the young man had gone into Mrs. Foley's my father said:

'He must be living in the attic, then. She couldn't rent it for a year, she told me. The ceiling is too low, it bumps your head.'

I walked past the house again in the afternoon and stared up at the windows. It was a dismal street, ending dead-end at the railroad embankment, with the only traffic an occasional huckster's wagon, and the only sound rising above the freights the peddler's weary voice shouting out his wares.

When I came back to the store I asked my father what the young man could be writing, but my father, already tired of my questions, told me to go out into the lots to play ball with the boys.

In a few weeks the whole neighborhood had noticed him and speculated as to his pursuits. Some of the neighbors felt like questioning Mrs. Foley, but Mrs. Foley, a small, thin-lipped individual, was known to have as her motto: 'A tongue wags, so does a dog's tail'; and so the burden fell upon my father. 'You ask her,' urged the housewives. 'She comes into your store, first talk about the weather.' So my father, the next time she came in, gathered up his courage and inquired if she had rented out her attic. She saw immediately what he was driving at and answered that she had. But the firm way in which her lips were held together convinced my father that further prying might mean the loss of her trade. So he

started putting some groceries into a bag and said he was glad to hear it. She left the store, leaving an atmosphere of close silence behind.

The spring passed into summer with no one finding out who or what the young man was. His tall gaunt figure, swinging along near the curbing of the sidewalk, became familiar in the neighborhood until he drew only a curious stare. At first some of the children threw handfuls of pebbles after him and ran, but when he did not pursue them they soon tired of the sport and stopped. But he continued to fascinate me and I followed him around. He emerged from his room only twice a day — at noon when he came into our store for his 'appetizer' (as my father called it), and early in the evening when he took his 'constitutional' along the Lake Street Elevated, just as dusk was falling. My mother once felt like talking to him and asking him to eat a good meal with us in our flat, but my father put a stop to that right away.

'Poets are queer,' said my father, getting his wisdom from God knows where. 'If you let them starve, they're happy. He's getting thinner every week, but he still walks along pretty good yet.'

He said this to cover up the fact that for the last two weeks he had given the young man his daily bottle of milk on credit.

'How long he'll hold out I don't know,' added my father. 'It ain't natural, he's a young boy yet.'

'Then why shouldn't he eat with us?' my mother asked.

'Why? Because he'd turn you down. Don't I know? I've asked him twice already!'

We were all astonished at this and after that my curiosity began to mount higher than ever. For the next few days I trailed him like a dog. When he left his room in the evening I was slinking along the shadows. From the paper-bound thrillers which I had been reading for over a year I had learned how to slink like a panther of the wilds. The supports of the Elevated, as I went along, threw their thick blacks of shade and gave me ample cover. I followed him 'scientifically,' dodging behind each 'L' support like a redskin in the forest. But I learned nothing about him, absolutely nothing. He would walk six or seven blocks east on Lake Street, then would walk back. On another night he would walk six or seven blocks west on Lake Street, then would turn back. He met nobody, made no strange gestures, and I saw no bulge in his back pocket hinting of a

pistol or a bowie knife. When a train of Elevated cars roared by overhead I looked keenly aloft but saw no maiden wave frantically or throw down her handkerchief as a signal of desperation. But I kept at it, feeling confident that he would some day give himself away. In a few of the books I had read, the heroes had trailed their prey for years before getting the goods on them.

Pretty soon the days grew warmer and warmer. All the kids in the neighborhood went barefoot, and there was swimming in the lagoon in Union Park. Then the dog days came in earnest, days of such uncomfortable heat that even the old settlers who had lived in Chicago for sixty years and had seen some hot summers had to admit that the present heat wave was pretty bad. Teams of horses took short rests under the shadow of the Elevated while the drivers came into our store for buckets of water to splash over the animals. Men walked in shirt sleeves, and even Doctor Hilton, the dressy dentist who had offices on the corner, took off his jacket and carried it over his arm.

But the poet still wore that wide black hat of his and didn't take off his coat at all. He must have perspired terribly. His hatband turned green where the brim met the crown, and at the back of his jacket, right between his protruding shoulder blades, there was always a long dark spot, darker than his suit. My father, who could control himself no longer, one day asked the young man if he didn't feel warm, wearing that heavy jacket. The poet stared blankly, then said he didn't mind it.

At that time the Hearst papers ran a weekly 'scientific' section in their Sunday supplements, and one day, going through the papers, I came upon some startling news. I brought the paper to my father's attention and told him to read an article. It was a half-column feature stating that it was possible to live years on a daily diet of milk. For those with less rigorous constitutions a few slices of bread or an occasional cracker or two would suffice. The article was accompanied by a 'scientific' chart of proteins and calories and was signed by a writer who was named Count Leo Torantto.

'Well, what about it?' asked my father shortly. 'What about it?'

I looked at him. Then he caught on. The news excited me. My father, however, scoffed at the idea; but though we never came across any proof, to this day I am convinced that that unfortunate young man authored the article I showed to my father.

At any rate, when the poet came in again I saw my father stare at the young man quizzically. I stood off to one side, looking at his face with a hawkish eye myself. A count, think of it!

'Ah, my count!' I wanted to say, 'you stand there, but you can't fool Old Gimlet Eye, the best scout on the plains. You are of the famous Torantto family.' My jaw must have been working, for my father, glancing my way, frowned at me.

The poet shook the bottle. His long bony fingers gripped the neck of it and shook it hard. Perspiration was rolling down the hollows of his cheeks. My father watched him, then stared the other way. It was plain to see that the man was starved and sick. Picking the paper cap from the bottle, he tilted it up in the air and started gulping hurriedly. He gulped a few times, then his hand trembled and in another moment the white milk was splashing down over his jacket, all over the front of it. The bottle fell from his hands and rolled around the floor, the contents mixing with the sawdust of the store.

The fellow sat down on a packing box and held his head between his hands. He told my father, who had become alarmed, that it was nothing, he had had such dizzy spells before.

'Well, sit awhile then,' said my father. 'No one is chasing you out. It's shady here but hot as fire on the sidewalks. You'll drink your milk later.'

The young man shook his head. 'I can't finish it.'

'All right, I'll give you a pint then,' said my father. 'And a box of crackers.'

A little later, when he drank the milk and ate the crackers, slowly, he did it sitting down. My father, now that the ice was broken, began to scold him.

'What kind of a living is this?' he asked of the young man. 'A boy has to eat, he has to live, he has to talk to folks. You don't look like a fool — pardon me — but you need to mix with people.'

He went on talking, but as soon as the young man was finished with the milk and crackers he left.

That night I heard my father talking to my mother. He told her something must be done about it. So the next noon, when the poet came in, my mother was in the store. He was half-finished with the bottle when she started to talk to him. Had it been my father I am sure he would have left the store and gone away, never to come back again, but because it was my mother talking he listened.

In a few simple words she invited him to have supper with us that evening.

'We're plain people, we don't fuss much, but the food I make tastes good,' she said.

He tried to get out of it, but my mother stood firm.

'If you're not there by half-past six, I'll send two of my big sons after you,' she said. 'We live at 1607 Walnut Street, on the second floor.'

He left the store, giving no promises.

But at six-thirty we heard a knock on the door and my sister, who was thirteen, opened it. She stood there shyly for a while.

'Hello,' she said, 'please come in.'

He came in and took his hat off, placing it on a chair. His lank dark hair, ragged and uncut, fell sideways over his ears and he smelled of strong tar soap and faintly of carbolic. He must have spent a good part of the afternoon scrubbing his face and hands, for his cheeks looked hot and raw and his hands were like pieces of meat.

My oldest brother Milt, home from the place he worked and reading the baseball sheet, got up and introduced himself. Milt wore a natty shirt and a natty tie and his brown soft hair swept back in a well-trained wave. 'A nut,' he must have thought, looking at our guest.

'All right,' my mother said, 'the table is set, everybody start eating. The soup is hot, don't eat too fast.'

All of us sat down. Eating with us had always been a solemn business; we never said a word until our plates were clean. But that evening the old routine was broken; we ate a little, broke our bread, then stared around a while. The young man, sitting between Milt and our mother, fumbled his fork in his hands. His shark-like jaws moved slowly. My mother, speaking softly, urged him to eat more, it was good for him, but after a while she grew silent. He was the only one sitting in his jacket (Milt had his fresh, laundered sleeves rolled to the elbow), and his gaunt figure, clothed in black, loomed over us like a shadow.

By the time the pie came around he said he was full, he couldn't eat any more. His great eyes, now that he was really satiated, stared glassily, slack and sleepy like a well-fed hound's.

After the meal we moved our chairs near the windows. The Elevated trains shot by, roaring as they passed. Once or twice Milt

tried to start a conversation with the poet, but, getting no co-operation, he picked up the newspaper and raised it before his eyes. My mother coughed, so he lowered it again.

'I see where the Cubs beat the Giants in a double-header,' he put forward, by way of finding out if our guest took an interest in big league games. But the young man, sitting lank, his bony hands on his knees, did not take up the conversation. He sat there like a gaunt sad hat-rack, staring out the windows. My sister, braiding her hair in a corner, stared and stared at him. The young man must have felt her gaze, for he made a movement as if he wanted to turn around, but continued to gaze blankly beyond the windows where a gloomy line of rooftops could be seen jutting up like teeth on the other side of the Elevated.

Finally Milt got up, flecked a few imaginary specks of dust from his sporty trousers, frowned, and said he was going out for a while. From the way he said it and because he was wearing his new shirt with the narrow brown and blue stripes in it, we all knew he was going sparking with one of the neighbors' daughters down the block.

'I'll be home presently,' he told my mother, frowning at the wall, then went into his bedroom to get his new straw hat. 'I'm just going for a walk,' he said.

'Don't be home late,' my mother called out softly. 'Remember, you haven't got the key.'

'All right, all right,' Milt muttered, then grumbled something about his being twenty years old already. He went out half-sullenly, slamming the door. My mother smiled proudly, watching him go down the street, then turned to the stranger and said with warmth: 'Just think, he's only nineteen and already his company is thinking of sending him out on the road to sell.'

The gaunt young man opened his square jaws, looked as if he ought to say something, then closed them again. My mother smiled at him. 'It's so hot, why don't you take your coat off?' she urged. But he did not answer, only staring past her out the window. And as he sat he began to perspire more. The hollows in his forehead began to move as if in breathing. Small as I was, I saw he would have given five years of his life to escape my mother's goodness. But he lacked the courage to stand up and go from our flat. My mother began to talk to him, trying to draw him out. She spoke about various matters, then asked about his family. He answered in

monosyllables, evasively, and his voice was flat, with hardly any timbre to it.

Well, this could not go on forever; the day was slowly fading and he began to sit on pins and needles. He sat like that for a whole half-hour, looking like an undertaker, while my mother, with her chair near the window, sat watching the children in the street, feeling a faint breeze against her arm. In her mind she must have figured that this hour to two in the bosom of a friendly family was a rare and precious interlude for our guest. But it must have been torture for him. My kid brother, about seven at the time, began prowling in the corners and shooting with his rubber bands. He shot pins and aimed at the stranger's legs. He shot once, twice, three, and four times, and the pins must have stung like grape shot. The stranger, whenever he was hit, merely clenched his jaws and winced. I went around behind my brother and started cruelly twisting his arm. But as soon as my mother shouted at me to stop, my kid brother got down to business again. He must have shot over thirty or forty pins, and when his aim was poor — and it was seldom so — I could hear the pins rattle faintly against the legs of the stranger's chair.

But at last the fellow could endure the pain no longer: he stood up awkwardly and said he had to go. My kid brother, as a parting salutation, hid himself behind the sofa and shot him straight into the rear.

My mother rose and came forward, giving the young man her hand.

'Come often, don't be bashful,' she told him, 'we always have plenty to eat.'

He thanked her awkwardly, still damp with perspiration, and knocking his knees over a chair my kid brother had placed behind him, stumbled and almost fell down the stairs. 'Be sure and come often,' my mother called after him, and in another moment she was leaning with her plump arm upon the window sill, watching him striding hurriedly, ungainly up the noisy street.

But he never came over to our flat again, though he still made his daily trips to our store for milk. And after my mother pressed my father to urge the young man to eat with us again — which my father refused to do — the poet went back to his old routine, crackers and milk, or just milk alone.

Things went on like this for another month, until the time came for Mrs. Foley to make her annual visit to her married son in Springfield. Before she left, Mrs. Foley came into our store and paid my father her bill and, before leaving, as an afterthought at the door, she said: 'I'll be gone two weeks; if the young man wants any groceries on credit, give it to him, coffee, beans, or bacon. I'll stand good for it; I'll pay you when I get back.'

But he never came into our store again, so we figured he must be using Mrs. Foley's kitchen for his cooking. The days went by and he kept away. Sometimes, along toward evening when the hot sun was already gone and the heat had died, he came out to walk under the thunder of the 'L' a way, keeping his eyes on the ground. His walks became shorter with each passing day and I trailed him like a hound. At the end of the first week he had cut his 'constitutionals' to two blocks, then to one block, then he did not come out of the house near the tracks again.

And that was the last time I ever saw him alive. When Mrs. Foley returned from Springfield, a full week later, she found him stretched out in bed. He was fully dressed, his mouth was wide open, and his arms were flung out like the wings of a hawk. Mrs. Foley shook him and, getting no response, hurried to my father, shrieking out the news. My father took it calmly, realizing his importance. He had the only telephone in the neighborhood, right behind the icebox, so he raised his fat arm and rang up the police. 'Headquarters?' he said in his full slow bass. 'There's been an accident,' and after giving out the details, he put a lock upon the door and accompanied Mrs. Foley back to her rooming house. I trailed along, keeping to one side.

In fifteen minutes the ambulance arrived. My father took charge of the situation, talking to the cops. 'There's been an accident,' he said with importance. The trains were roaring along the embankment, smoke hung in the sky, and soon, sniffing disaster, the grimy doors of the neighbors were flung ajar. The hospital limousine stood stately, its expensive engine throbbing. A young interne went up, came quickly down again. 'A starvation case,' he muttered to the chauffeur. Mrs. Foley stood plucking at her finger tips; she knew nothing about the poet's family and repeated to the police: 'He came to me one day for a room, I gave it to him, he never paid me and I never bothered him,' she said. And my father, in a rather

pompous solid voice, told the cops about the youth's meals of milk and crackers or just milk alone. He caught sight of me in the pauses and motioned at me to go home.

I stood around, however, filled with morbidity. I hung about the knot of folk, listening to the talk. Once or twice I stared up at what had been his solitary window. It stood directly under the eaves and a grackle's nest was there. I stood there looking on, until the small crowd parted. The police made a lane for two men with a burden and I crept peering closer, standing with bated breath.

Coming through the lane of folk, on a stretcher, a gaunt form lay lank and still. He had been covered over with a blanket but the descent of the stairs had slipped it halfway off his chest. His mouth was still open and the hollows of his forehead were very deep. They hoisted him into the ambulance and rolled him deep within the car. Unaware of me, my father had come up close by, so that I felt his presence near. He stood behind me speaking, so that his words, spoken slowly, would be impressive, for the curse of the pen was already upon me and he wanted to cure me of such a pernicious habit. 'They live in little rooms,' he repeated, 'where they scribble and starve to death.'

And that was the first and only lecture from his lips. The limousine drove away, humming up the street. For a while the small knot stood about gossiping, then broke up, thinning, until all were gone. The housewives disbanded and went into their homes again. The gray grim doors banged shut. From a dull, leaden sky a few large drops began to fall. 'Come, it's raining,' said my father, and I followed him back to the store.

THE SNOWS OF KILIMANJARO*

By ERNEST HEMINGWAY

(From *Esquire*)

THE marvellous thing is that it's painless,' he said. 'That's how you know when it starts.'

'Is it really?'

'Absolutely. I'm awfully sorry about the odor though. That must bother you.'

'Don't! Please don't.'

'Look at them,' he said. 'Now is it sight or is it scent that brings them like that?'

The cot the man lay on was in the wide shade of a mimosa tree and as he looked out past the shade onto the glare of the plain there were three of the big birds squatted obscenely, while in the sky a dozen more sailed, making quick-moving shadows as they passed.

'They've been there since the day the truck broke down,' he said. 'Today's the first time any have lit on the ground. I watched the way they sailed very carefully at first in case I ever wanted to use them in a story. That's funny now.'

'I wish you wouldn't,' she said.

'I'm only talking,' he said. 'It's much easier if I talk. But I don't want to bother you.'

'You know it doesn't bother me,' she said. 'It's that I've gotten so very nervous not being able to do anything. I think we might make it as easy as we can until the plane comes.'

'Or until the plane doesn't come.'

'Please tell me what I can do. There must be something I can do.'

'You can take the leg off and that might stop it, though I doubt it. Or you can shoot me. You're a good shot now. I taught you to shoot didn't I?'

'Please don't talk that way. Couldn't I read to you?'

'Read what?'

'Anything in the book bag that we haven't read.'

* Copyright, 1936, by Esquire, Inc.

'I can't listen to it,' he said. 'Talking is the easiest. We quarrel and that makes the time pass.'

'I don't quarrel. I never want to quarrel. Let's not quarrel any more. No matter how nervous we get. Maybe they will be back with another truck today. Maybe the plane will come.'

'I don't want to move,' the man said. 'There is no sense in moving now except to make it easier for you.'

'That's cowardly.'

'Can't you let a man die as comfortably as he can without calling him names? What's the use of slanging me?'

'You're not going to die.'

'Don't be silly. I'm dying now. Ask those bastards.' He looked over to where the huge, filthy birds sat, their naked heads sunk in the hunched feathers. A fourth planed down, to run quick-legged and then waddle slowly toward the others.

'They are around every camp. You never notice them. You can't die if you don't give up.'

'Where did you read that? You're such a bloody fool.'

'You might think about someone else.'

'For Christ's sake,' he said, 'that's been my trade.' He lay then and was quiet for a while and looked across the heat shimmer of the plain to the edge of the bush. There were a few Tommies that showed minute and white against the yellow and, far off, he saw a herd of zebra, white against the green of the bush. This was a pleasant camp under big trees against a hill, with good water, and, close by, a nearly dry water hole where sand grouse flighted in the mornings.

'Wouldn't you like me to read?' she asked. She was sitting on a canvas chair beside his cot. 'There's a breeze coming up.'

'No thanks.'

'Maybe the truck will come.'

'I don't give a damn about the truck.'

'I do.'

'You give a damn about so many things that I don't.'

'Not so many, Harry.'

'What about a drink?'

'It's supposed to be bad for you. It said in Black's to avoid all alcohol. You shouldn't drink.'

'Molo!' he shouted.

'Yes Bwana.'

'Bring whiskey-soda.'

'Yes Bwana.'

'You shouldn't,' she said. 'That's what I mean by giving up. It says it's bad for you. I know it's bad for you.'

'No,' he said. 'It's good for me.'

So now it was all over, he thought. So now he would never have a chance to finish it. So this was the way it ended in a bickering over a drink. Since the gangrene started in his right leg he had no pain and with the pain the horror had gone and all he felt now was a great tiredness and anger that this was the end of it. For this, that now was coming, he had very little curiosity. For years it had obsessed him; but now it meant nothing in itself. It was strange how easy being tired enough made it.

Now he would never write the things that he had saved to write until he knew enough to write them well. Well, he would not have to fail at trying to write them either. Maybe you could never write them, and that was why you put them off and delayed the starting. Well he would never know, now.

'I wish we'd never come,' the woman said. She was looking at him holding the glass and biting her lip. 'You never would have gotten anything like this in Paris. You always said you loved Paris. We could have stayed in Paris or gone anywhere. I'd have gone anywhere. I said I'd go anywhere you wanted. If you wanted to shoot we could have gone shooting in Hungary and been comfortable.'

'Your bloody money,' he said.

'That's not fair,' she said. 'It was always yours as much as mine. I left everything and I went wherever you wanted to go and I've done what you wanted to do. But I wish we'd never come here.'

'You said you loved it.'

'I did when you were all right. But now I hate it. I don't see why that had to happen to your leg. What have we done to have that happen to us?'

'I suppose what I did was to forget to put iodine on it when I first scratched it. Then I didn't pay any attention to it because I never infect. Then, later, when it got bad, it was probably using that weak carbolic solution when the other antiseptics ran out that paralyzed

the minute blood vessels and started the gangrene.' He looked at her, 'What else?'

'I don't mean that.'

'If we would have hired a good mechanic instead of a half baked kikuyu driver, he would have checked the oil and never burned out that bearing in the truck.'

'I don't mean that.'

'If you hadn't left your own people, your goddamned old West-bury, Saratoga, Palm Beach people to take me on —'

'Why I loved you. That's not fair. I love you now. I'll always love you. Don't you love me?'

'No,' said the man. 'I don't think so. I never have.'

'Harry, what are you saying? You're out of your head.'

'No. I haven't any head to go out of.'

'Don't drink that,' she said. 'Darling, please don't drink that. We have to do everything we can.'

'You do it,' he said. 'I'm tired.'

Now in his mind he saw a railway station at Karagatch and he was standing with his pack and that was the headlight of the Simplon-Orient cutting the dark now and he was leaving Thrace then after the retreat. That was one of the things he had saved to write, with, in the morning at breakfast, looking out the window and seeing snow on the mountains in Bulgaria and Nansen's Secretary asking the old man if it were snow and the old man looking at it and saying, No, that's not snow. It's too early for snow. And the Secretary repeating to the other girls, No, you see. It's not snow and them all saying, It's not snow we were mistaken. But it was the snow all right and he sent them on into it when he evolved exchange of populations. And it was snow they tramped along in until they died that winter.

It was snow too that fell all Christmas week that year up in the Gauertal, that year they lived in the woodcutter's house with the big square porcelain stove that filled half the room, and they slept on mattresses filled with beech leaves, the time the deserter came with his feet bloody in the snow. He said the police were right behind him and they gave him woolen socks and held the gendarmes talking until the tracks had drifted over. In Schruns, on Christmas day, the snow was so bright it hurt your eyes when you looked out from the weinstube and saw everyone coming home from church. That was where they walked up the sleigh-smoothed urine-yellowed road along the river with the steep pine

hills, skis heavy on the shoulder, and where they ran that great run down the glacier above the Madlener-haus, the snow as smooth to see as cake frosting and as light as powder and he remembered the noiseless rush the speed made as you dropped down like a bird. They were snowbound a week in the Madlener-haus that time in the blizzard playing cards in the smoke by the lantern light and the stakes were higher all the time as Herr Lent lost more. Finally he lost it all. Everything, the ski-schule money and all the season's profit and then his capital. He could see him with his long nose, picking up the cards and then opening, 'Sans Voir.' There was always gambling then. When there was no snow you gambled and when there was too much you gambled. He thought of all the time in his life he had spent gambling. But he had never written a line of that, nor of that cold, bright Christmas day with the mountains showing across the plain that Barker had flown across the lines to bomb the Austrian officers' leave train, machine-gunning them as they scattered and ran. He remembered Barker afterwards coming into the mess and starting to tell about it. And how quiet it got and then somebody saying, 'You bloody, murderous bastard.' Those were the same Austrians they killed then that he skied with later. No not the same. Hans, that he skied with all that year, had been in the Kaiser-Jägers and when they went hunting hares together up the little valley above the saw-mill they had talked of the fighting on Pasubio and of the attack on Pertica and Asalone and he had never written a word of that. Nor of Monte Corno, nor the Siete Comuni, nor of Arsiero. How many winters had he lived in the Vorarlberg and the Arlberg? It was four and then he remembered the man who had the fox to sell when they had walked into Bludenz, that time to buy presents, and the cherry pit taste of good kirsch, the fast-slipping rush of running powder-snow on crust, singing 'Hi Ho said Rolly!' as you ran down the last stretch to the steep drop, taking it straight, then running the orchard in three turns and out across the ditch and onto the icy road behind the inn. Knocking your bindings loose, kicking the skis free and leaning them up against the wooden wall of the inn, the lamplight coming from the window where inside, in the smoky, new-wine smelling warmth, they were playing the accordion.

'Where did we stay in Paris?' he asked the woman who was sitting by him in a canvas chair, now, in Africa.

'At the Crillon. You know that.'

'Why do I know that?'

'That's where we always stayed.'

'No. Not always.'

'There and at the Pavillion Henri-Quatre in St. Germain. You said you loved it there.'

'Love is a dunghill,' said Harry. 'And I'm the cock that gets on it to crow.'

'If you have to go away,' she said, 'is it absolutely necessary to kill off everything you leave behind? I mean do you have to take away everything? Do you have to kill your horse, and your wife and burn your saddle and your armour?'

'Yes,' he said. 'Your damned money was my armour. My Swift and my Armour.'

'Don't.'

'All right. I'll stop that. I don't want to hurt you.'

'It's a little bit late now.'

'All right then. I'll go on hurting you. It's more amusing. The only thing I ever really liked to do with you I can't do now.'

'No, that's not true. You liked to do many things and everything you wanted to do I did.'

'Oh for Christ sake stop bragging will you?'

He looked at her and saw her crying.

'Listen,' he said. 'Do you think that it is fun to do this? I don't know why I'm doing it. It's trying to kill to keep yourself alive I imagine. I was all right when we started talking. I didn't mean to start this, and now I'm crazy as a coot and being as cruel to you as I can be. Don't pay any attention, darling, to what I say. I love you, really. You know I love you. I've never loved anyone else the way I love you.' He slipped into the familiar lie he made his bread and butter by.

'You're sweet to me.'

'You bitch,' he said. 'You rich bitch. That's poetry. I'm full of poetry now. Rot and poetry. Rotten poetry.'

'Stop it. Harry, why do you have to turn into a devil now?'

'I don't like to leave anything,' the man said. 'I don't like to leave things behind.'

It was evening now and he had been asleep. The sun was gone behind the hill and there was a shadow all across the plain and the small animals were feeding close to camp; quick dropping heads and switching tails, he watched them keeping well out away from the

bush now. The birds no longer waited on the ground. They were all perched heavily in a tree. There were many more of them. His personal boy was sitting by the bed.

'Memsahib's gone to shoot,' the boy said. 'Does Bwana want?' 'Nothing.'

She had gone to kill a piece of meat and, knowing how he liked to watch the game, she had gone well away so she would not disturb this little pocket of the plain that he could see. She was always thoughtful, he thought. On anything she knew about, or had read, or that she had ever heard.

It was not her fault that when he went to her he was already over. How could a woman know that you meant nothing that you said; that you spoke only from habit and to be comfortable. After he no longer meant what he said, his lies were more successful with women than when he had told them the truth.

It was not that he lied as that there was no truth to tell. He had had his life and it was over and then he went on living it again with different people and more money, with the best of the same places, and some new ones. You kept from thinking and it was all marvelous. You were equipped with good insides so that you did not go to pieces that way, the way most of them had, and you made an attitude that you cared nothing for the work you used to do, now that you could no longer do it. But, in yourself, you said that you would write about these people; about the very rich; that you were really not of them but a spy in their country; that you would leave it and write of it and for once it would be written by someone who knew what he was writing of. But he would never do it, because each day of not writing, of comfort, of being that which he despised, dulled his ability and softened his will to work so that, finally, he did no work at all. The people he knew now were all much more comfortable when he did not work. Africa was where he had been happiest in the good time of his life so he had come out here to start again. They had made this safari with the minimum of comfort. There was no hardship; but there was no luxury and he had thought that he could get back into training that way. That in some way he could work the fat off his soul the way a fighter went into the mountains to work and train in order to burn it out of his body.

She had liked it. She said she loved it. She loved anything that was exciting, that involved a change of scene, where there were new

people and where things were pleasant. And he had felt the illusion of returning strength of will to work. Now if this was how it ended, and he knew it was, he must not turn like some snake biting itself because its back was broken. It wasn't this woman's fault. If it had not been she it would have been another. If he lived by a lie he should try to die by it. He heard a shot beyond the hill.

She shot very well this good, this rich bitch, this kindly caretaker and destroyer of his talent. Nonsense. He had destroyed his talent himself. Why should he blame this woman because she kept him well? He had destroyed his talent by not using it, by betrayals of himself and what he believed in, by drinking so much that he blunted the edge of his perceptions, by laziness, by sloth, and by snobbery, by pride and by prejudice, by hook and by crook. What was this? A catalogue of old books? What was his talent anyway? It was a talent all right but instead of using it, he had traded on it. It was never what he had done, but always what he could do. And he had chosen to make his living with something else instead of a pen or a pencil. It was strange too, wasn't it, that when he fell in love with another woman, that woman should always have more money than the last one? But when he no longer was in love, when he was only lying, as to this woman, now, who had the most money of all, who had all the money there was, who had had a husband and children, who had taken lovers and been dissatisfied with them, and who loved him dearly as a writer, as a man, as a companion and as a proud possession; it was strange that when he did not love her at all and was lying, that he should be able to give her more for her money than when he had really loved. We must all be cut out for what we do, he thought. However you make your living is where your talent lies. He had sold vitality, in one form or another, all his life and when your affections are not too involved you give much better value for the money. He had found that out but he would never write that, now, either. No, he would not write that, although it was well worth writing.

Now she came in sight, walking across the open toward the camp. She was wearing jodhpurs and carrying her rifle. The two boys had a Tommy slung and they were coming along behind her. She was still a good looking woman, he thought, and she had a pleasant body. She had a great talent and appreciation for the bed, she was not pretty, but he liked her face, she read enormously, liked to ride

and shoot and, certainly, she drank too much. Her husband had died when she was still a comparatively young woman and for a while she had devoted herself to her two just-grown children, who did not need her and were embarrassed at having her about, to her stable of horses, to books, and to bottles. She liked to read in the evening before dinner and she drank scotch and soda while she read. By dinner she was fairly drunk and after a bottle of wine at dinner she was usually drunk enough to sleep.

That was before the lovers. After she had the lovers she did not drink so much because she did not have to be drunk to sleep. But the lovers bored her. She had been married to a man who had never bored her and these people bored her very much.

Then one of her two children was killed in a plane crash and after that was over she did not want the lovers, and drink being no anaesthetic she had to make another life. Suddenly she had been acutely frightened of being alone. But she wanted someone that she respected with her.

It had begun very simply. She liked what he wrote and she had always envied the life he led. She thought he did exactly what he wanted to. The steps by which she had acquired him and the way in which she had finally fallen in love with him were all part of a regular progression in which she had built herself a new life and he had traded away what remained of his old life. He had traded it for security, for comfort too, there was no denying that, and for what else? He did not know. She would have bought him anything he wanted. He knew that. She was a damned nice woman too. He would as soon be in bed with her as anyone; rather with her, because she was richer, because she was very pleasant and appreciative and because she never made scenes. And now this life that she had built again was coming to a term because he had not used iodine two weeks ago when a thorn had scratched his knee as they moved forward trying to photograph a herd of waterbuck standing, their heads up, peering while their nostrils searched the air, their ears spread wide to hear the first noise that would send them rushing into the bush. They had bolted, too, before he got the picture.

Here she came now.

He turned his head on the cot to look toward her. 'Hello,' he said.

'I shot a Tommy ram,' she told him. 'He'll make you good broth

and I'll have them mash some potatoes with the Klim. How do you feel?'

'Much better.'

'Isn't that lovely. You know I thought perhaps you would. You were sleeping when I left.'

'I had a good sleep. Did you walk far?'

'No. Just around behind the hill. I made quite a good shot on the Tommy.'

'You shoot marvellously you know.'

'I love it. I've loved Africa. Really. If *you're* all right it's the most fun that I've ever had. You don't know the fun it's been to shoot with you. I've loved the country.'

'I love it too.'

'Darling you don't know how marvellous it is to see you feeling better. I couldn't stand it when you felt that way. You won't talk to me like that again, will you? Promise me?'

'No,' he said. 'I don't remember what I said.'

'You don't have to destroy me. Do you? I'm only a middle-aged woman who loves you and wants to do what you want to do. I've been destroyed two or three times already. You wouldn't want to destroy me again, would you?'

'I'd like to destroy you a few times in bed,' he said.

'Yes. That's the good destruction. That's the way we're made to be destroyed. The plane will be here tomorrow.'

'How do you know?'

'I'm sure. It's bound to come. The boys have the wood all ready and the grass to make the smudge. I went down and looked at it again today. There's plenty of room to land and we have the smudges ready at both ends.'

'What makes you think it will come tomorrow?'

'I'm sure it will. It's overdue now. Then, in town, they will fix up your leg and then we will have some good destruction. Not that dreadful talking kind.'

'Should we have a drink? The sun is down.'

'Do you think you should?'

'I'm having one.'

'We'll have one together. *Molo, letti dui whiskey-sodal*' she called.

'You'd better put on your mosquito boots,' he told her.

'I'll wait till I bathe ...'

While it grew dark they drank and just before it was dark and there was no longer enough light to shoot, a hyena crossed the open on his way around the hill.

'That bastard crosses there every night,' the man said. 'Every night for two weeks.'

'He's the one makes the noise at night. I don't mind it. They're a filthy animal though.'

Drinking together, with no pain now except the discomfort of lying in the one position, the boys lighting a fire, its shadow jumping on the tents, he could feel the return of acquiescence in this life of pleasant surrender. She *was* very good to him. He had been cruel and unjust in the afternoon. She was a fine woman, marvelous really. And just then it occurred to him that he was going to die.

It came with a rush; not as a rush of water nor of wind; but of a sudden evil smelling emptiness and the odd thing was that the hyena slipped lightly along the edge of it.

'What is it, Harry?' she asked him.

'Nothing,' he said. 'You had better move over to the other side. To windward.'

'Did Molo change the dressing?'

'Yes. I'm just using the boric now.'

'How do you feel?'

'A little wobbly.'

'I'm going in to bathe,' she said. 'I'll be right out. I'll eat with you and then we'll put the cot in.'

So, he said to himself, we did well to stop the quarreling. He had never quarreled much with this woman, while with the women that he loved he had quarreled so much they had finally, always, with the corrosion of the quarreling, killed what they had together. He had loved too much, demanded too much, and he wore it all out.

He thought about alone in Constantinople that time, having quarreled in Paris before he had gone out. He had whored the whole time and then, when that was over, and he had failed to kill his loneliness, but only made it worse, he had written her, the first one, the one who left him, a letter telling her how he had never been able to kill it. . . . How when he thought he saw her outside the Regence one time it made him go all faint and sick inside, and that he would follow a woman who looked like her in some way, along the Boulevard, afraid to see it was not she, afraid to

lose the feeling it gave him. How everyone he had slept with had only made him miss her more. How what she had done could never matter since he knew he could not cure himself of loving her. He wrote this letter at the Club, cold sober, and mailed it to New York asking her to write him at the office in Paris. That seemed safe. And that night missing her so much it made him feel hollow sick inside, he wandered up past Taxim's, picked a girl up and took her out to supper. He had gone to a place to dance with her afterward, she danced badly, and left her for a hot Armenian slut, that swung her belly against him so it almost scalded. He took her away from a British gunner subaltern after a row. The gunner asked him outside and they fought in the street on the cobbles in the dark. He'd hit him twice, hard, on the side of the jaw and when he didn't go down he knew he was in for a fight. The gunner hit him in the body, then beside his eye. He swung with his left again and landed and the gunner fell on him and grabbed his coat and tore the sleeve off and he clubbed him twice behind the ear and then smashed him with his right as he pushed him away. When the gunner went down his head hit first and he ran with the girl because they heard the M. P.'s coming. They got into a taxi and drove out to Rimmily Hissa along the Bosphorus, and around, and back in the cool night and went to bed and she felt as over-ripe as she looked but smooth, rose-petal, syrupy, smooth-bellied, big-breasted and needed no pillow under her, and he left her before she was awake looking blousy enough in the first daylight and turned up at the Pera Palace with a black eye, carrying his coat because one sleeve was missing. That same night he left for Anatolia and he remembered, later on that trip, riding all day through fields of the poppies that they raised for opium and how strange it made you feel finally and all the distances seemed wrong, to where they had made the attack with the newly arrived Constantine officers, that did not know a goddamned thing, and the artillery had fired into the troops and the British observer had cried like a child. That was the day he'd first seen dead men wearing white ballet skirts and upturned shoes with pompons on them. The Turks had come steadily and lumpily and he had seen the skirted men running and the officers shooting into them and running then themselves and he and the British observer had run too until his lungs ached and his mouth was full of the taste of pennies and they stopped behind some rocks and there were the Turks coming as lumpily as ever. Later he had seen the things that he could never think of and later still he had seen much worse. So when he got back to Paris that time he could not talk about it or stand to have it

mentioned. And there in the café as he passed was that American poet with a pile of saucers in front of him and a stupid look on his potato face talking about the Dada movement with a Roumanian who said his name was Tristan Tzara, who always wore a monocle and had a headache, and, back at the apartment with his wife that now he loved again, the quarrel all over, the madness all over, glad to be home, the office sent his mail up to the flat. So then the letter in answer to the one he'd written came in on a platter one morning and when he saw the handwriting he went cold all over and tried to slip the letter underneath another. But his wife said, 'Who is that letter from, dear?' and that was the end of the beginning of that. He remembered the good times with them all, and the quarrels. They always picked the finest places to have the quarrels. And why had they always quarreled when he was feeling best? He had never written any of that because, at first, he never wanted to hurt anyone and then it seemed as though there was enough to write without it. But he had always thought that he would write it finally. There was so much to write. He had seen the world change; not just the events; although he had seen many of them and had watched the people, but he had seen the subtler change and he could remember how the people were at different times. He had been in it and he had watched it and it was his duty to write of it; but now he never would.

'How do you feel?' she said. She had come out from the tent now after her bath.

'All right.'

'Could you eat now?' He saw Molo behind her with the folding table and the other boy with the dishes.

'I want to write,' he said.

'You ought to take some broth to keep your strength up.'

'I'm going to die tonight,' he said. 'I don't need my strength up.'

'Don't be melodramatic, Harry, please,' she said.

'Why don't you use your nose? I'm rotted half way up my thigh now. What the hell should I fool with broth for? Molo bring whiskey-soda.'

'Please take the broth,' she said gently.

'All right.'

The broth was too hot. He had to hold it in the cup until it cooled enough to take it and then he just got it down without gagging.

'You're a fine woman,' he said. 'Don't pay any attention to me.'

She looked at him with her well known, well loved face from *Spur*

and *Town and Country*, only a little the worse for drink, only a little the worse for bed, but *Town and Country* never showed those good breasts and those useful thighs and those lightly small-of-back-caressing hands, and as he looked and saw her well known pleasant smile, he felt death come again. This time there was no rush. It was a puff, as of a wind that makes a candle flicker and the flame go tall.

'They can bring my net out later and hang it from the tree and build the fire up. I'm not going in the tent tonight. It's not worth moving. It's a clear night. There won't be any rain.'

So this was how you died, in whispers that you did not hear. Well, there would be no more quarreling. He could promise that. The one experience that he had never had he was not going to spoil now. He probably would. You spoiled everything. But perhaps he wouldn't.

'You can't take dictation, can you?'

'I never learned,' she told him.

'That's all right.'

There wasn't time, of course, although it seemed as though it telescoped so that you might put it all into one paragraph if you could get it right.

There was a log house, chinked white with mortar, on a hill above the lake. There was a bell on a pole by the door to call the people in to meals. Behind the house were fields and behind the fields was the timber. A line of lombardy poplars ran from the house to the dock. Other poplars ran along the point. A road went up to the hills along the edge of the timber and along that road he picked blackberries. Then that log house was burned down and all the guns that had been on deer foot racks above the open fire place were burned and afterwards their barrels, with the lead melted in the magazines, and the stocks burned away, lay out on the heap of ashes that were used to make lye for the big iron soap kettles, and you asked Grandfather if you could have them to play with, and he said, no. You see they were his guns still and he never bought any others. Nor did he hunt any more. The house was rebuilt in the same place out of lumber now and painted white and from its porch you saw the poplars and the lake beyond, but there were never any more guns. The barrels of the guns that had hung on the deer feet on the wall of the log house lay out there on the heap of ashes and no one ever touched them.

In the Black Forest, after the war, we rented a trout stream and there

were two ways to walk to it. One was down the valley from Triberg and around the valley road in the shade of the trees that bordered the white road, and then up a side road that went up through the hills past many small farms, with the big Schwarzwald houses, until that road crossed the stream. That was where our fishing began. The other way was to climb steeply up to the edge of the woods and then go across the top of the hills through the pine woods, and then out to the edge of a meadow and down across this meadow to the bridge. There were birches along the stream and it was not big, but narrow, clear and fast, with pools where it had cut under the roots of the birches. At the Hotel in Triberg the proprietor had a fine season. It was very pleasant and we were all great friends. The next year came the inflation and the money he had made the year before was not enough to buy supplies to open the hotel and he hanged himself.

You could dictate that, but you could not dictate the Place Contrescarpe where the flower sellers dyed their flowers in the street and the dye ran over the paving where the autobus started and the old men and the women, always drunk on wine and bad marc; and the children with their noses running in the cold; the smell of dirty sweat and poverty and drunkenness at the Café des Amateurs and the whores at the Bal Musette they lived above. The Concierge who entertained the trooper of the Garde Republicaine in her loge, his horsehair plumed helmet on a chair. The locataire across the hall whose husband was a bicycle racer and her joy that morning at the Cremerie when she had opened L'Auto and seen where he placed third in Paris-Tours, his first big race. She had blushed and laughed and then gone upstairs crying with the yellow sporting paper in her hand. The husband of the woman who ran the Bal Musette drove a taxi and when he, Harry, had to take an early plane the husband knocked upon the door to wake him and they each drank a glass of white wine at the Zinc of the bar before they started. He knew his neighbors in that quarter then because they all were poor. Around that Place there were two kinds; the drunkards and the sportifs. The drunkards killed their poverty that way; the sportifs took it out in exercise. They were the descendants of the Communards and it was no struggle for them to know their politics. They knew who had shot their fathers, their relatives, their brothers, and their friends when the Versailles troops came in and took the town after the Commune and executed anyone they could catch with calloused hands, or who wore a cap, or carried any other sign he was a working man. And in that poverty, and in that

quarter across the street from a *Boucherie Chevaline* and a wine co-operative he had written the start of all he was to do. There never was another part of Paris that he loved like that, the sprawling trees, the old white plastered houses painted brown below, the long green of the autobus in that round square, the purple flower dye upon the paving, the sudden drop down the hill of the rue Cardinal Lemoine to the River, and the other way the narrow crowded world of the rue Mouffetard. The street that ran up toward the Pantheon and the other that he always took with the bicycle, the only asphalted street in all that quarter, smooth under the tires, with the high narrow houses and the cheap tall hotel where Paul Verlaine had died. There were only two rooms in the apartment where they lived and he had a room on the top floor of that hotel that cost him sixty francs a month where he did his writing, and from it he could see the roofs and chimney pots and all the hills of Paris.

From the apartment you could only see the wood and coal man's place. He sold wine too, bad wine. The golden horse's head outside the *Boucherie Chevaline* where the carcasses hung yellow gold and red in the open window, and the green painted co-operative where they bought their wine; good wine and cheap. The rest was plaster walls and the windows of the neighbors. The neighbors who, at night, when someone lay drunk in the street, moaning and groaning in that typical French ivresse that you were propagandized to believe did not exist, would open their windows and then the murmur of talk.

'Where is the policeman? When you don't want him the bugger is always there. He's sleeping with some concierge. Get the Agent.' Till someone threw a bucket of water from a window and the moaning stopped. 'What's that? Water. Ah, that's intelligent.' And the windows shutting. Marie, his *femme de menage*, protesting against the eight hour day saying, 'If a husband works until six he gets only a little drunk on the way home and does not waste too much. If he works only until five he is drunk every night and one has no money. It is the wife of the working man who suffers from this shortening of hours.'

'Wouldn't you like some more broth?' the woman asked him now.

'No thank you very much. It is awfully good.'

'Try just a little.'

'I would like a whiskey-soda.'

'It's not good for you.'

'No. It's bad for me. Cole Porter wrote the words and the music. This knowledge that you're going mad for me.'

'You know I like you to drink.'

'Oh yes. Only it's bad for me.'

When she goes, he thought. I'll have all I want. Not all I want but all there is. Ayee he was tired. Too tired. He was going to sleep a little while. He lay still and death was not there. It must have gone around another street. It went in pairs, on bicycles, and moved absolutely silently on the pavements.

No, he had never written about Paris. Not the Paris that he cared about. But what about the rest that he had never written?

What about the ranch and the silvered gray of the sage brush, the quick, clear water in the irrigation ditches, and the heavy green of the alfalfa. The trail went up into the hills and the cattle in the summer were shy as deer. The bawling and the steady noise and slow moving mass raising a dust as you brought them down in the fall. And behind the mountains, the clear sharpness of the peak in the evening light and, riding down along the trail in the moonlight, bright across the valley. Now he remembered coming down through the timber in the dark holding the horse's tail when you could not see and all the stories that he meant to write.

About the half-wit chore boy who was left at the ranch that time and told not to let anyone get any hay, and that old bastard from the Forks who had beaten the boy when he had worked for him stopping to get some feed. The boy refusing and the old man saying he would beat him again. The boy got the rifle from the kitchen and shot him when he tried to come into the barn and when they came back to the ranch he'd been dead a week, frozen in the corral, and the dogs had eaten a big part of him. But what was left you packed on a sled wrapped in a blanket and roped on and you got the boy to help you haul it, and the two of you took it out over the road on skis, and sixty miles down to town to turn the boy over. He having no idea that he would be arrested. Thinking he had done his duty and that you were his friend and he would be rewarded. He'd helped to haul the old man in so everybody could know how bad the old man had been and how he'd tried to steal some feed that didn't belong to him, and when the sheriff put the handcuffs on the boy he couldn't believe it. Then he'd started to cry. That was one story he had saved to write. He knew at least twenty good stories from out there and he had never written one. Why?

'You tell them why,' he said.

'Why what, dear?'

'Why nothing.'

She didn't drink so much, now, since she had him. But if he lived he would never write about her, he knew that now. Nor about any of them. The rich were dull and they drank too much, or they played too much backgammon. They were dull and they were repetitious. He remembered poor Scott Fitzgerald and his romantic awe of them and how he had started a story once that began, 'The very rich are different from you and me.' And how someone had said to Scott, 'Yes they have more money. But that was not humorous to Scott. He thought they were a special glamorous race and when he found they weren't it wrecked him just as much as any other thing that wrecked him.'

He had been contemptuous of those who wrecked. You did not have to like it because you understood it. He could beat anything, he thought, because no thing could hurt him if he did not care.

All right. Now he would not care for death. One thing he had always dreaded was the pain. He could stand pain as well as any man, until it went on too long, and wore him out, but here he had something that had hurt frightfully and just when he had felt it breaking him, the pain had stopped.

He remembered long ago when Williamson, the bombing officer, had been hit by a stick bomb someone in a German patrol had thrown as he was coming in through the wire that night and, screaming, had begged everyone to kill him. He was a fat man, very brave, and a good officer, although addicted to fantastic shows. But that night he was caught in the wire, with a flare lighting him up and his bowels spilled out into the wire, so when they brought him in, alive, they had to cut him loose. Shoot me, Harry. For Christ sake shoot me. They had had an argument one time about our Lord never sending you anything you could not bear and someone's theory had been that meant that at a certain time the pain passed you out automatically. But he had always remembered Williamson that night. Nothing passed out Williamson until he gave him all his morphine tablets that he had always saved to use himself and then they did not work right away.

Still this now, that he had, was very easy; and if it was no worse as it went on there was nothing to worry about. Except that he would rather be in better company.

He thought a little about the company that he would like to have.

No, he thought, when everything you do, you do too long, and do

too late, you can't expect to find the people still there. The people all are gone. The party's over and you are with your hostess now.

I'm getting as bored with dying as with everything else, he thought.

'It's a bore,' he said out loud.

'What is, my dear?'

'Anything you do too bloody long.'

He looked at her face between him and the fire. She was leaning back in the chair and the firelight shone on her pleasantly lined face and he could see that she was sleepy. He heard the hyena make a noise just outside the range of the fire.

'I've been writing,' he said. 'But I got tired.'

'Do you think you will be able to sleep?'

'Pretty sure. Why don't you turn in?'

'I like to sit here with you.'

'Do you feel anything strange?' he asked her.

'No. Just a little sleepy.'

'I do,' he said.

He had just felt death come by again.

'You know the only thing I've never lost is curiosity,' he said to her.

'You've never lost anything. You're the most complete man I've ever known.'

'Christ,' he said. 'How little a woman knows. What is that? Your intuition?'

Because, just then, death had come and rested its head on the foot of the cot and he could smell its breath.

'Never believe any of that about a scythe and a skull,' he told her. 'It can be two bicycle policemen as easily, or be a bird. Or it can have a wide snout like a hyena.'

It had moved up on him now, but it had no shape any more. It simply occupied space.

'Tell it to go away.'

It did not go away but moved a little closer.

'You've got a hell of a breath,' he told it. 'You stinking bastard.'

It moved up closer to him still and now he could not speak to it, and when it saw he could not speak it came a little closer, and now he tried to send it away without speaking, but it moved in on him so its weight as all upon his chest, and while it crouched there and he

could not move, or speak, he heard the woman say, 'Bwana is asleep now. Take the cot up very gently and carry it into the tent.'

He could not speak to tell her to make it go away and it crouched now, heavier, so he could not breathe. And then, while they lifted the cot, suddenly it was all right and the weight went from his chest.

It was morning and had been morning for some time and he heard the plane. It showed very tiny and then made a wide circle and the boys ran out and lit the fires, using kerosene, and piled on grass so there were two big smudges at each end of the level place and the morning breeze blew them toward the camp and the plane circled twice more, low this time, and then glided down and levelled off and landed smoothly and, coming walking toward him, was old Compton in slacks, a tweed jacket and a brown felt hat.

'What's the matter, old cock?' Compton said.

'Bad leg,' he told him. 'Will you have some breakfast?'

'Thanks. I'll just have some tea. It's the Puss Moth you know. I won't be able to take the Memsahib. There's only room for one. Your lorry is on the way.'

Helen had taken Compton aside and was speaking to him. Compton came back more cheery than ever.

'We'll get you right in,' he said. 'I'll be back for the Mem. Now I'm afraid I'll have to stop at Arusha to refuel. We'd better get going.'

'What about the tea?'

'I don't really care about it you know.'

The boys had picked up the cot and carried it around the green tents and down along the rock and out onto the plain and along past the smudges that were burning brightly now, the grass all consumed, and the wind fanning the fire, to the little plane. It was difficult getting him in, but once in he lay back in the leather seat, and the leg was stuck straight out to one side of the seat where Compton sat. Compton started the motor and got in. He waved to Helen and to the boys and, as the clatter moved into the old familiar roar, they swung around with Compie watching for wart-hog holes and roared, bumping, along the stretch between the fires and with the last bump rose and he saw them all standing below, waving, and the camp beside the hill, flattening now, and the plain spreading, clumps of trees, and the bush flattening, while the game

trails ran now smoothly to the dry waterholes, and there was a new water that he had never known of. The zebra, small rounded backs now, and the wildebeeste, big headed dots seeming to climb as they moved in long fingers across the plain, now scattering as the shadow came toward them, they were tiny now, and the movement had no gallop, and the plain as far as you could see, gray-yellow now and ahead old Compie's tweed back and the brown felt hat. Then they were over the first hills and the wildebeeste were trailing up them, and then they were over mountains with sudden depths of green-rising forest and the solid bamboo slopes, and then the heavy forest again, sculptured into peaks and hollows until they crossed, and hills sloped down and then another plain, hot now, and purple brown, bumpy, with heat and Compie looking back to see how he was riding. Then there were other mountains dark ahead. And then instead of going on to Arusha they turned left, he evidently figured that they had the gas, and looking down he saw a pink sifting cloud, moving over the ground, and in the air, like the first snow in a blizzard, that comes from nowhere, and he knew the locusts were coming up from the South. Then they began to climb and they were going to the East it seemed, and then it darkened and they were in a storm, the rain so thick it seemed like flying through a waterfall, and then they were out and Compie turned his head and grinned and pointed and there, ahead, all he could see, as wide as all the world, great, high, and unbelievably white in the sun, was the square top of Kilimanjaro. And then he knew that there was where he was going.

Just then the hyena stopped whimpering in the night and started to make a strange, human, almost crying sound. The woman heard it and stirred uneasily. She did not wake. In her dream she was at the house on Long Island and it was the night before her daughter's debut. Somehow her father was there and he had been very rude. Then the noise the hyena made was so loud she woke and for a moment she did not know where she was and she was very afraid. Then she took the flashlight and shone it on the other cot that they had carried in after Harry had gone to sleep. She could see his bulk under the mosquito bar but somehow he had gotten his leg out and it hung down alongside the cot. The dressings had all come down and she could not look at it.

'Molo,' she called. 'Molo! Molo!'

Then she said, 'Harry, Harry!' Then her voice rising, 'Harry! Please, Oh Harry!'

There was no answer and she could not hear him breathing.

Outside the tent the hyena made the same strange noise that had awakened her. But she did not hear him for the beating of her heart.

HOMECOMING¹

By EDWARD HARRIS HETH

(From *The American Mercury*)

SOME of them got there before the rising sun had really dried the dew from the long grass. The brothers and sisters came back home again, back to the grove. They were all there, all except one. Ernestine, the mother, waited for them on the porch, rocking over the creaking boards almost from the first moment the sun rolled across the hill, waiting for them to come with their children and children's children, bending her withered cheek forward for them to kiss as they arrived.

Henry, the eldest, came all the way from Ashtabula, Ohio. 'Why, Ma, of all things . . .!' he cried, still parked in his Buick before the porch, as though he hadn't expected to see her. He turned to his family (except his wife who hadn't come, saying *she* wasn't crazy, driving God knew how many hundred miles just to see a lot of Dousmans) sitting in the rear of the car. 'Baby,' he said to his grandchild, 'here's your great-grandma. You never saw her.'

Ernestine looked at the child strangely but without any recognition.

'Dreat-dramma,' the child repeated.

Henry guffawed, hitting his thigh.

A thin girl of thirteen, wearing glasses, came toward his car diffidently with a tablet and pencil. 'Who are you?' she asked in a watery voice.

'Who am I?' he asked. 'Why, I'll bet anything I'm your Uncle Henry. You're one of Bertha's kids — I'll bet a dollar you are!'

'I'm Edna Birchard,' the girl said. 'You're Henry Dousman? Are you the first son?' She was making a Family Tree, a whole sheaf of names inscribed under the heading of GOTTLIEB DOUSMAN — ERNESTINE DOUSMAN. Gottlieb had been dead twelve years, up on the hill.

Then Henry spied his sister Bertha, tall and corpulent. 'Why Bert, you old —!' he roared, and rushed up to her, gripping her

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firm thick shoulder with loud enthusiasm. 'Say, it's been fifteen years I'll bet since I saw you — since Pa's funeral. Why, you old —! Well, you haven't grown any smaller.'

Bertha looked at him mournfully. He was surprised she *wasn't* happier to see him.

'Twelve years,' she said.

'You haven't told me which son you are,' Edna, the young girl, said, following him with her watery eyes, her pencil poised diffidently but concentratedly on the tablet.

'Why, the eldest,' he said. 'The first-born, the Eldest — I'm head of this whole darn family,' he shouted. 'This your kid, Bertha?' he asked, patting the young girl's small round head. He shook merrily with laughter.

'She's my youngest daughter,' Bertha said quietly.

All the Dousmans were there, gathered together again. Ernestine, the mother, looked at them dispassionately.

'Well, Ma, you don't seem overjoyed to see us!' Henry cried. But then he heard the hum of another motor behind him and saw Edna, with her tablet and pencil, already hurrying to greet the new car. He craned his neck to see through the windshield, opaque with a flash of sun. He squinted, wondering. Fred? ... Annie? ... Adolph? ... 'Why, Annie, you old —!' he roared, dashing across the lawn.

The young scrawny girl with shoulders as thin as paper was already there, leaning solemnly against the front fender. 'Who are you? Your name Dousman?' she asked, blinking.

Henry was snorting like an animal, his face red and bursting with good spirits. He gripped the door of the sedan with his heavy butcher's hands and stuck his head through the open window, scanning the rear seat where three grown-ups and two children were jammed between lunch-baskets and satchels. Annie was very frail, with wisps of yellow hair flapping against her white forehead. He remembered the hair — it used to be pure gold, and so long she could sit on the braids. He had given her a box of gold hairpins one Christmas. 'Hello, Henry,' she said mildly. 'This is my daughter and you know my husband, don't you? And here's my son and his ...'

They nodded curtly, unacquainted. They were sullen and embarrassed.

Henry glanced elatedly around at the crowd of people, all of similar blood though not many of them looking alike. Sometimes he glimpsed a familiar feature — the broad straight Dousman nose, the fleshy limbs, or the peculiar dull brown hair, though his own was already white. He laughed loudly, talked loudly, shaking hands. He asked everyone how the old homestead looked to them, and had many anecdotes ready on his lips for the children. He recognized every scene of his childhood: where the dishwater used to be poured over warm yellow rocks under an apple tree; where Annie used to hide her gold hairpins in a rip in the parlor sofa; where Fred and Herb used to stand their muddy boots; with a boyish soft chuckle — *O, kennst du das Land?*

II

Down in the grove, sweltering now under the heat of the risen sun, seeping a brilliant green through the leaves of maples and elms, the women laid long tables with white cloths and jars of potato salad and hams baked in a rich crust. Most of the Dousmans were heavy and strongly built, save Annie and Fred. Adolph, the third son, with great shields of sweat on his striped shirt under his arms, watched the women.

‘By God, Bertha,’ he said, ‘you haven’t changed any.’

‘You have,’ Bertha answered. ‘You’re twice as fat.’

He laughed in a high squeal, his face wrinkled like a damp wad of cloth. Only the Dousman nose was left in all this fat.

‘Still sassy?’ he chortled, his eyes lost in his cheeks. ‘Still the old bulldog? Say, I thought your man could take that out of you.’

‘You ought to be careful about yourself,’ Bertha said, eyeing him dryly with a bunch of forks in her fist. ‘It’s not healthy being so fat. Did everyone bring enough forks?’

Adolph’s wife, a plain woman from upstate, was laying the plates. ‘I guess he’s healthy enough,’ she said, but not smiling. ‘I think he can take care of himself. Or maybe I can.’

Bertha flushed and quickly began dropping the tin forks beside the plates. ‘I didn’t mean —’ she began, keeping her eyes downward. ‘My lands, he’s my own brother — There won’t be enough forks.’

Adolph squealed, and turned his broad bull back to them.

Ernestine, the mother, sat with her eldest daughter Annie and Annie's daughter and grandchild — the four generations from three to ninety-one — stiffly under the hot sun in the middle of the grove, blinking at the town photographer cautiously placing his tripod in a small space clear of dung. The herd of cows, turned from the grove into a neighboring treeless pasture for this one Sunday, watched morosely over the fence, their glossy hides broiling from the sun and twitching from flies. Henry squinted at them from the shade of a high elm tree, his hands locked behind his back. He even strolled a short way toward them, suddenly oblivious to the noise and shouting around him, and thought how they could not be the same cows he had tended thirty years ago. He laughed at this, still feeling pleased with this reunion. 'Bess?' he called softly. One cow — the one who might have been Bess, with a similar black patch over her moony left eye, though he knew it couldn't be Bess — switched her tail and moved away.

Henry turned back toward the photographer and saw him fumbling his way under the black hood that draped the camera. He liked hearing the old sounds, the brook, the crows, the old voices. He saw Adolph coming toward him, his big feet planting themselves unsteadily on the little muggy hillocks that filled the grove.

Both of them saw the women at the lunch table begin to smile softly at the sight of four generations having their picture taken together, and one of the women got tears in her eyes until the thick slices of ham she piled on the platter were one reddish blur. The other men, uncles and cousins and nephews and in-laws, coming from the hot pasture where a ball game had ended, grunted and nudged each other. Henry plucked a blade of sweetgrass from the ground and put it between his teeth, chewing it and recalling the same sugary taste of thirty years ago, as he glanced around the green unchanged grove of his childhood. He felt sorry that the cow who wasn't Bess had switched away when he called her Bess. 'You're real pretty, Ma!' he called. 'No one could guess you were the great-grandma — you look no more'n a girl!'

The women, making a loud clatter with cups and plates, laughed nervously.

Ernestine, sitting erect, looked at him and said nothing; her ninety-one-year-old face was more wrinkled than ever as she sat in

the bright patch of sun, her eyes blinking, her thin mouth locked in a scowl, and her emaciated hands, the skin stretched taut over the knuckles like old freckled leather, folded in a knot in her lap.

Annie disrupted the pose by leaning forward to pat her mother's scrawny shoulders with her own frail hand. 'You're all right now, Ma? This sun isn't too much for you?' she asked weakly.

'Just one little minute, folks,' the photographer said, raising his head from under the hood.

'Grandma's all right,' Annie's daughter said dryly.

But still Ernestine made no answer, her hands an angry knot in the pouch of her skirt.

Wearing a wreath of field daisies around the gray felt hat shoved back on his head, Fred, the second-youngest son, tall and lean, broke suddenly into hidden laughter. 'What a picture, what a picture!' he kept saying, smacking his hands together. For a moment a cloud passed over the sun and then the grove lay green and dark and sibilant. Fred snapped a daisy from his hat brim and twirled it in his fingers until the sun came back again. 'Say, this'll be a gem,' he laughed quietly. He looked youthful and eager, though he was past forty. 'Why, we ought to send one of these pictures to Herb.'

Bertha glanced at him sharply, the blade of her knife flashing blue in the sunlight as she curtly stopped her slicing motion.

'Herb?' Henry said, the sweetgrass arrested between his teeth. 'Someone talking about Herb?'

'Who's Herb?' the thin girl making the Family Tree asked.

Fred heard the women at the long table stop their chatter. 'Why, what's the matter?' he asked in a hurt whisper. 'Why can't I talk about Herb if I want to?' His dark soft eyes shot from one person to the next, his forehead furrowed as he looked at Henry. 'Why, what's wrong, man?' he asked, as though he didn't know what was wrong, his voice strained and false like a guilty child's.

'Herb — Herb coming?' Ernestine asked.

'Just a minute now, folks,' the photographer said, bobbing again from under his black hood.

'No, Ma, Herb's not coming,' Henry said. 'And if he did —'

'Herb?' she asked, and made a slight motion forward in her chair.

'Ma, sit still!' Annie said.

Then the three-year-old great-grandchild began to whimper be-

cause of the heat and tried to break away from the posing group.

'Doris May!' Annie's lank daughter called to the child and reached out a long arm, encircling the child and drawing her back into the lens's focus.

'What we need is a moving-picture machine!' Adolph squealed, and then for a moment the four generations sat stiffly and everyone held his breath and with a little sigh the photographer clicked his shutters.

And they were immortalized.

III

Tossed a few feet away from the table, the thick white bones of the hams lay gleaming in the sun. Up the hill an expedition of women climbed almost bent double, their broad buttocks catching the sunlight, to put flowers they had gathered from the fields on the grave of Gottlieb, the father. In the pasture the sun fell in a merciless sheen. The herd of cows shoved close together and stared soberly toward the grove, now deserted save for a few children napping on blankets. The younger men, coatless and some of them stripped to the waist, played baseball again; the ball flew over the sunny pasture like a shining meteor. At the side of the field, the wreath of daisies in a shrivelled band around his hat, Fred and one of his nephews served free beer to whoever wanted it. He watched Henry get up from the stone on which he had been watching the ball game, and saunter toward him.

'You don't want to go talking about Herb like that in front of everyone,' Henry said. 'Makes Ma feel bad.'

'Why, what's the matter, man?' Fred asked in a little wail, pursing his lips. He raised his eyebrows, his dark gentle eyes morose and wounded. He was only a year older than Herb. 'What's the matter with Herb? He's all right.'

'You been seeing him?' Henry asked, glancing abruptly in Fred's eyes with suspicion.

'Why, no more lately than you, I suppose,' Fred whispered, frightened. 'Not for years. I never get to Chicago.'

Henry looked down at the hot cracked ground. But Fred could remember much of their youth together, his and Herb's and Henry's — the treks from the barn to the grove at dawn and back

again at night and how once Henry had got his foot crushed by an unruly cow; the hunts in the marsh for witch-fires at night; Henry's first girl, and how he came back late at night to the attic to tell them what it had been like, down beside Mecklesberg's Creek.

'Why, say —' Fred began, his eyes suddenly lighting.

Henry turned from the ball game and looked at him questioningly.

'Why, nothing,' Fred said.

'Just the same, besides making Ma feel bad,' Henry said, 'think of the girls — Annie and Bertha —'

'*Bier her, Bier her, oder ich fall um . . .*' two of the younger men came singing, Adolph's son and Bertha's son-in-law, rapidly becoming acquainted over swift draughts of beer.

From the ballfield in the hot sweltering afternoon came loud feverish cries of victory or defeat. Adolph, with sweat rolling down the caverns of his cheeks, was umpire, standing solidly under the bright sun, patches of wet under his armpits like great dark wings. Henry watched, feeling less cheerful than when he arrived from Ashtabula early that morning. He wished now that his wife had come along. He felt he did not know any of these people. At the far end of the pasture there used to be a spring welling into a horse trough; for the first twenty years of his life he had seen the spring ceaselessly churning inside the trough, and his father, Gottlieb, used to tell him how it had been running like that for forty years; and now he wondered whether the spring was still running — shading his eyes, he could see the trough still standing, its tin sides ablaze with sun.

All around him the younger men, some of them only boys, waiting their turn to bat, were talking about this Uncle Herb they had never seen.

'I'll bet he's living the right kind of life, though —'

'Uncle Herb? Jesus, I'd like a look at him. I never saw a gambler.'

'I wouldn't mind if he remembered his relatives.'

'Is he that rich?'

'Oh, my God, did you ever see a gambler that wasn't?'

'He's got a woman, you get it? A jump —'

'Oh, my God, no —'

From the ballfield Adolph suddenly roared like a bull. His once-genial face was distorted in the merciless sunlight, his lips flabby and

wet. 'Well, you kids, is one of you goin' to bat soon? Washer-women!'

Then one of the young men stepped to the home plate, grabbing the bat swiftly and waiting with nervous tenseness for the ball to be flung at him.

Henry went up to one of the youths remaining on the sideline, a young boy with a lean chin on which hair was just beginning to grow. 'Son,' he said, 'we don't talk about Herb around here.'

The youth looked at him and blanched. 'Okay, Uncle —' he said and started to add a name, but could not remember which uncle this was.

Henry moved up slowly toward third base, his strong butcher's arms locked behind his back. 'Adolph,' he called. 'How about quitting this game and taking a little stroll? Like to see if that old spring's still running?' And he added a snort of laughter, by way of offering his affection.

Adolph wiped his flabby hands under his armpits but kept one eye on the batter. 'Why, hell no,' he half-chortled, and then roared wildly, like a drum struck, 'BALL ONE!'

Henry thought of going down to the spring alone, but the sun was too blistering; he started toward the beer-stand but felt he could not go there. He wondered what had happened to his reunion — this was only a group of strangers having a picnic. He wished again fiercely that his wife had come with him. His only comfort was that Herb wasn't here — Herb could run away from home if he wanted to and not settle down like the others, could become rich, become a gambler and doubtless a crooked gambler (they all believed he had), keep a woman, and live a high and wicked life in Chicago; but he couldn't come back home. Henry sat down again in the shade of an overlapping tree from the grove, where the cows huddled nearby, in one monstrous tangle of beef.

IV

Coming down the hill from their pilgrimage, the garland of women grew silent, mopping their brows with folded handkerchiefs. They had little to say to each other and puffed and looked wretchedly toward the cool grove at the foot of the hill. The younger women, scarcely acquainted, spoke politely and tried to make good impres-

sions but soon said nothing. The sound of the many women's dresses brushing the foliage as they descended the hill made a murmur like distant wind.

'Herb's the only one who never saw it,' Ernestine said suddenly, still walking ahead of all of them.

'Saw what?' Bertha asked.

'The grave.'

But she was not speaking to her sullen, unsisterly daughters; she spoke to the hillside, the burning sun, the ground under her quick feet.

The heat made the unacquainted women irksome and weary; all of them wondered vaguely why they had troubled to come all this way back home, from upstate, Ohio, Montana. Each of the younger girls thought the other girls were dressed shoddily. On the way up the hill the two sisters spoke to each other sweetly though distantly, but on the way down they dabbed their foreheads and wiped their throats with their handkerchiefs and plodded in silence, remembering nothing of their childhood together.

The women had scarcely reached the bottom of the hill when they heard an uproar from the ballfield, angry voices growing fierce as they hurtled through the hot still air, furious shouts and obscene cries. The ball game had abruptly ended in a quarrel; the men were pressing around Adolph on the diamond and waving fists, their faces convulsed in the blinding sunlight. They swung bats and called each other bastards and two of the younger boys began walloping each other until they rolled in a cloud of dust over the pasture. The women saw Henry jump from a stone alongside the field and rush with grotesque waving arms to separate them, his mouth wide open in revolted rage. All the men, brothers and cousins and uncles and nephews, were roaring at one another.

The women rushed aghast toward the pasture and each woman took the side of her husband, screaming in high voices and pushing angrily at each other. They watched Henry trying to separate the men and quell the row. Annie's pale head twitched and she kept pulling her handkerchief through her nervous wiry fingers, her dry impotent body erect. Bertha breathed heavily and glowered at her. Each believed the other's husband had begun the fight.

So that very few saw the car come into the driveway up at the old house. But the young girl of thirteen dashed up the path with her

tablet and pencil, returning, after the car had sputtered away again, with the telegram in her hand. Then the murmur of the telegram's arrival spun through the grove and pasture and, as quickly as it had begun, the row subsided.

'It's for Grandma,' the girl said.

Henry came swiftly from the ballfield, still trembling, his face grimy with dust and sweat, his throat raspy as he breathed. 'I'll take it, girlie,' he panted.

'She said it's for Ma,' Bertha said, glowering. 'Edna, give it to Grandma. Ma, shall I read it for you?'

'Never mind —' Henry said, wiping his damp hand over his mouth.

'Edna, give it to me,' Annie said sweetly, though ashen-faced.

'Maybe Ma could read her own telegram,' Bertha said.

Edna looked from one to the other with the telegram crushed in her hand, and did not know which way to turn. But before the others could reach her, Henry strode forward and took it from her hands. Ernestine stood silent in the middle of this alien group and looked very small, her dark wrinkled face seeming childish. Henry let the envelope flutter to the hot green floor of the grove. He was still trembling.

'Herb's coming.'

The fifty pairs of eyes darted and glinted like bees under the elms and maples.

'He says, "Arriving at four o'clock."'

'How'd he know? ...'

'Why — I — I just sent him a post card,' said Fred, whose memories were freshest, in a hurt whisper, his lips pursed and dry. He switched his eyes guiltily, drops of sweat standing on his lean forehead. 'Well, what's the matter with that?' he cried, his voice louder than he intended it to be, when no one spoke.

'Herb?' Ernestine said, looking up.

Many people unthinkingly glanced at their watches and Henry's tired eyes squinted up at the sun but no one said anything.

'You wouldn't think he'd have the nerve —' Adolph said at last, and shook all his fat in a snort. A moment later he squealed curtly in his high, feminine laughter.

V

When the beer was gone, the two young men who had become rapidly acquainted, Adolph's son and Bertha's son-in-law, took up a collection of quarters and half-dollars from the men and went for more. They took Henry's Buick, without telling him. Adolph's son threw the car in gear and reversed so swiftly that they grazed the oak tree on the lawn; they guffawed and shot forward, the gears shifting from second to high with silky smoothness. They grew still drunker from the brilliant glare of sunlight on the fenders and hood. But Adolph's boy, intoxicated by this easy speed, was driving too swiftly. Only a hundred rods from the house, unaware of the bend in the road, he plunged his broad foot with all his drunken might on the brake, but could not halt the terrific speed of the Buick, and ran headlong into the great shining black Cadillac as it rounded the curve.

The Buick joggled and toppled at the thunderous impact and came to a dead stop without turning over, its front fenders and headlights smashed and one wheel rolling weirdly fifty feet down the road; but the Cadillac lurched into the air like a hurt black bull, turned turvy with a shatter of glass, leapt upright again, then tumbled sidewise into the ditch. It lay on its side, its engine whirling.

They waited paralyzed inside the Buick, stricken at first only by the defeat of this great Cadillac by the smaller car, then relieved and limp at their own escape. There was no sound from the big car, shining, yet crushed like paper, in the glare. But suddenly Adolph's son gave a short choked cry and jumped from the car, followed by Bertha's son-in-law, rubbing his bruised knee. And abruptly they both understood who was in the smashed silent Cadillac.

Then almost before they could reach the overturned car the throng of people came hurrying up the road from the grove, men with distorted faces, and gasping women, surrounding the car like flies around something dead, pushing the two young men out of the way as a dozen hands reached out to wrench open the door of the sedan.

Herb was richly dressed in a flannel suit and a thin silk shirt with the initials H D embroidered on the pocket, and expensive kid shoes, with bright socks on his feet and a gay tie round his neck. He had a

large diamond on his thick finger and another smaller diamond in his tie. He was crushed between the front seat and the steering wheel, slipped down from the seat though with his bloody hands still gripping the wheel. He wasn't dead; his eyes were open and looked alive and they could hear his rasping breath. He was grinning comically as they lifted him out of the car.

But he did not come home alone. On the seat beside him, slipped forward on her knees as though she were praying, but unconscious, they found a young woman of thirty, dressed in blue with a string of blue beads around her neck, her hair tumbled forward over her eyes and her head hanging to one side as though the neck were broken. As they started to lift her out, she revived, looking about her wildly with her mouth opened as though she wanted to scream. 'What's the matter — what are you doing?' and she began swinging her arms, hitting the men who were lifting her out. Abruptly she fainted again, loose in their arms.

Herb came home like this: he weighed almost two hundred pounds but he was so limp he sagged in the middle like a rolled-up carpet as the five men carried him to the house, a whole procession of relatives following slowly and whispering to one another, one of them bringing his soiled panama hat. The girl, reviving again, followed behind with her lean hand held up to her head, supported by Adolph and Bertha's husband.

No one ever mentioned his name.

Ernestine waited alone on the front porch, her hands locked under her apron. Annie rushed up to her, white-faced, her eyes suddenly tired and red-rimmed. 'Now, Ma,' she began, 'you come into the house — you don't want to see this —' But she stood silent on the porch that slanted a little to one side with age, waiting with curious, cold, child's eyes. They came staggering under his weight, breathing heavily and calling whispered commands to each other; and his eyes seemed conscious and he kept the comical grin on his mouth, as though this were a very funny deal of the cards.

They took him into one of the little blue-walled bedrooms. The woman who came with him did not go into the bedroom but sat outside in the kitchen on an old plush sofa, her fingers absently tugging at pieces of horsehair which protruded through a tiny hole. The men who had carried him in grunted, and mopped their necks and hands, and looked stupidly at each other. They stared stupidly

at Ernestine, who sat quietly on the edge of the bed with her worn brown hand over Herb's, this son of hers who had come back. She kept opening her mouth trying to speak but no words came. Henry, holding fast to the foot of the iron bedstead, somehow had expected Herb to come home looking as he had when he ran away one night twenty years ago; he kept squinting down at the big broken body with puzzled eyes, unable to recognize his brother.

After a few moments he went quietly back to the kitchen, crowded as though for a party. 'He died,' he said, and ran his tongue over his lip. 'Just now.'

Fred, leaning against the door, raised his frightened hurt eyes, pursing his mouth. 'Why, what are you talking about, man?' he whispered and went white.

The two ashen-faced young men who had killed Herb shot each other frenzied glances and one of them, Adolph's son, broke into loud sobbing like a child and rushed into his father's arms. Some of the younger children, unacquainted with death, kept trying to see through the bedroom doorway but were afraid to get too close.

'Herb?' the thin young girl asked, looking at her Family Tree tablet. 'Which one is he? I can't find his name —'

Then all the children were swiftly hustled out of the room and those who were not closely related, the younger people and the in-laws, and a few others who were afraid of death, left too. Only the family, the brothers and sisters and the woman who came home with him, remained. There wasn't any sound in the room. Suddenly the woman who had come with him, her tousled hair still falling over her eyes, a small scratch on her lean young cheek, looked up; her body slim and eel-like. 'What?' she asked, staring at everyone around her. 'Who are you?'

They were all watching her, except Fred who stood against the door jamb with the startled hurt look in his eyes. Henry coughed. 'He was our brother,' he explained.

'What?' she muttered again.

'He died.'

'For Christ's sake,' she said quietly, and then gaped at the bare boards of the kitchen floor, and looked abruptly sick and older.

They were all startled when Annie gave a soft whimper and burst into tears, rushing into the bedroom where her mother was alone with Herb. She stayed there only a minute and came out

weak and dazed. She threw herself into Bertha's arms, sobbing but without any sound whatsoever.

Adolph tried to comfort her, patting her back. 'Hey, now —' he began, but ended by repeating deep and dry in his throat, 'I'll be — I'll be — I'll be —'

'Cigarette,' Herb's woman said, holding out her open hand but still with her eyes fastened to the floor. She did not even blink.

Both Adolph and Henry went to her with cigarettes and matches but Fred stood unmoving, letting his hurt questioning eyes rove from one to the other of them, unable to understand. The girl held the cigarette in her mouth, her hands drooping between her knees. 'You feeling all right?' Henry asked, more softly than he expected to. She did not answer but after a few puffs stood up, raising her bare arms as though she were only going to stretch herself and even parting her lips as though for a yawn, but then rushed her hands swiftly over her eyes.

They forgot to resent her cigarette. Adolph made a sound like coughing, puffing his flabby big cheeks, and went into the bedroom. Annie left Bertha's arms and went over to put her own arms around the girl, who had begun to sob with her hands over her eyes. Suddenly the girl fainted, slipping from Annie's frail arms with a quiet thud to the floor.

Annie was helpless. '*Ach, du lieber Gott, 's ist schrecklich!*' she wailed and was on her knees, tugging ridiculously at the girl to pick her up, slipping into the German they had often used years ago.

Bertha and Henry picked her up. Bertha sat beside the girl on the sofa, quickly loosening the belt tight around her slim waist. 'Get this lady some water!' Henry cried to Fred, but Fred looked at him dumbly. 'Water!' he repeated. All Annie could do was drop on the sofa and rub the girl's hands.

Fred brought water from the pump outside and gave it to Henry blankly.

The girl revived, her face becoming a little green, then white.

'There, you all right now?' Bertha asked. She took the water from Henry and held it to the girl's lips. 'You lay down here. You'll be all right. There's a doctor coming any minute.'

The girl let her eyes glance jerkily around the kitchen, as though she were trying to recognize it.

'You'll be all right,' Bertha repeated. 'We're all his people. You

can lie down snug here.' She stood up and began patting the sofa, but the girl would not lie down. 'Give us that pillow, Henry.'

Surprised by the familiar ring in Bertha's voice as she said his name, Henry bounded quickly to the rocker near the window and brought the pillow for her.

'No thanks,' the girl said, but tried to smile.

Adolph came out of the bedroom with his mother. Her eyes were red-rimmed. She saw the girl for the first time. 'Who is that?' she asked.

'Why, it's Herb's friend, Ma,' Henry said.

They all looked older and tired and Ernestine looked timeless. She looked very small, too, surrounded by her children. 'Well, take her in the bedroom,' she said. For the first time that day, she spoke and looked at her children directly, as though she had them back again. The daughters helped Ernestine cover the girl with quilts even though the sun shone hotly, and Henry rushed down the road to see where the doctor was, and Adolph silently ordered the peering face of his youngest child away from the bedroom window. Then they all stood close to the bedstead watching the girl, a tight circle of them around Ernestine, except Fred, the second-youngest, who still stood by the kitchen door, his eyes sunken and frightened as he watched the waiting group in the bedroom. Soon he raised his hurt startled eyes, going in to join them.

Henry thought how after the burial, up on the hill, they would all return to the new homes they had made upstate, in Ohio, Montana, forgetting again. He wondered what it was that had happened to all of them, that only a death could reunite them.

THE SURGEON AND THE NUN¹

By PAUL HORGAN

(From *Harper's Bazaar*, New York)

HERE you are. I haven't thought of this for thirty years. I don't know what called it to mind. I'll tell you anyway.

When I was a young doctor just out of internship I left Chicago to come West, oh, for several reasons. I'd worked hard and they were afraid my lungs might be a little weakened, and then besides, I've always been independent, and wanted to get out on my own, and I'd seen enough of the society doctors back there. Anyway, I came on, and heard of a new section of country in New Mexico, opening up, down toward Texas, and thinks I, I'll just go and see about it. The hottest day I ever spent, yes, and the next night, and the next day, too, as you'll see.

The railroad spur had been pushing down South through the Pecos Valley, a few miles a week, and it was in July that I got on the train and bought a ticket for Eddy, the town I was thinking about trying.

The track was completed all the way, by then, but they had a lot of repairing to do all the time, and no train schedule was maintained, because we'd move, and crawl, and then stop; baking; with nothing but dust to breathe, white dust like filtered sunlight; outside the car window was naked land — with freckles, I remember thinking: spotty bushes and gravel. Above, a blue sky like hot metal. The heat swam on the ground.

You couldn't sleep or read or think.

There was nobody to talk to in the car.

Two seats across the aisle from me was a Sister of Mercy, sitting there in her black robes, skirts and sleeves, and heavy starch, and I wondered at the time, How on earth can she stand it? The car was an oven. She sat there looking out the window, calm and strengthened by her philosophy. It seemed to me she had expressive hands; I recalled the sisters in the hospital in Chicago, and how they had

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learned to say so much and do so much with their skilled hands. When my traveling nun picked up a newspaper and fanned herself slowly, it was more as if she did it in grace than to get cool.

She was in her early thirties, I thought, plump, placid and full of a wise delicacy and yes, independence, with something of the un-earthly knowingness in her steady gaze that I used to see in the Art Institute — those portraits of ladies of the fifteenth century, who look at you sideways, with their eyebrows up.

She wore glasses, very bright, with gold bars to them.

Well, the train stopped again.

I thought I couldn't stand it. When we moved, there was at least a stir of air, hot and dusty, but at that, we felt as if we were getting some place, even though slowly. We stopped, and the cars creaked in the heat, and I felt thick in the head. I put my face out the window and saw that we had been delayed by a work gang up ahead. They were Mexican laborers. Aside from them, and their brown crawlings up and down the little road-bed embankment, there was nothing, no movement, no life, no comfort, for miles. A few railroad sheds painted dusty red stood by the trackside.

I sat for ten minutes; nothing happened. I couldn't even hear the sounds of work, ringing pickaxes or whatnot; I felt indignant. This was no way to maintain a public conveyance!

It was around one o'clock in the afternoon.

Mind you, this was 1905, it isn't a wilderness any more out here. Oh, it was then. Every time I looked out at the white horizon my heart sank, I can tell you. Why had I ever left Chicago?

Then I wondered where the Sister was traveling to.

It was strange how comforting she was, all of a sudden. I had a flicker of literary amusement out of the Chaucerian flavor of her presence — a nun, traveling, alone, bringing her world with her no matter where she might be, or in what circumstance; sober, secure, indifferent to anything but the green branches of her soul; benign about the blistering heat and the maddening delay; and withal, an object of some archaic beauty, in her medieval habit, her sidelong eyes, her plump and frondy little hands. I almost spoke to her several times, in that long wait of the train; but she was so classic in her repose that I finally decided not to. I got up instead and went down to the platform of the car, which was floury with dust all over its iron floor and coupling chains, and jumped down to the ground.

How immense the sky was, and the sandy plains that shuddered with the heat for miles and miles! And how small and oddly desirable the train looked!

It was all silent until I began to hear the noises that framed that midsummer midday silence . . . bugs droning, the engine breathing up ahead, a whining hum in the telegraph wires strung along by the track, and then from the laborers a kind of subdued chorus.

I went to see what they were all huddled about each other for.

There wasn't a tree for fifty miles in any direction.

In the heat-reflecting shade of one of the grape red sheds the men were standing around and looking at one of their number who was lying on the ground with his back up on the lowest boards.

The men were mostly little, brown as horses, sweating and smelling like leather, and in charge of them was a big American I saw squatting down by the recumbent Mexican.

'Come on, come on,' he was saying, when I came up.

'What's the matter?' I asked.

The foreman looked up at me. He had his straw hat off, and his forehead and brows were shad-belly white where the sunburn hadn't reached. The rest of his face was apple colored, and shiny. He had little eyes, squinted, and the skin around them was white, too. His lips were chapped and burnt powdery white.

'Says he's sick.'

The Mexicans nodded and murmured.

'Well, I'm a doctor, maybe I can tell.'

The foreman snorted.

'They all do it. Nothin' matter with him. He's just play-actin'. Come on, Pancho, you get, by God, t'hell up, now!'

He shoved his huge dusty shoe against the little Mexican's side. The Mexican drooled a weak cry. The other laborers made operatic noises in chorus. They were clearly afraid of the foreman.

'Now hold on,' I said to him. 'Let me look him over, anyway.'

I got down on the prickly ground.

It took a minute or less to find out. The little cramped up Mexican had an acute attack of appendicitis, and he was hot and sick and when I touched his side, he wept like a dog and clattered on his tongue without words.

'This man is just about ready to pop off,' I told the foreman. 'He's got acute appendicitis. He'll die unless he can be operated on.'

The heat; the shimmering land; something to do; all changed me into feeling cool and serious, quite suddenly.

'I can perform an emergency operation, somehow, though it may be too late. Anyway, it can't do more'n kill him, and he'll die if I don't operate, that's sure!'

'Oh, no. *Oh*-ho, no, you don't,' said the foreman, standing up and drawling. He was obviously a hind, full of some secret foremanship, some plainsman's charm against the evil eye, or whatever he regarded civilization as. 'I ain't got no authority for anythin' like that on my section gang! And ennyhow, they all take on like that when they're tarred of workin'!'

Oh, it was the same old thing.

All my life I've got my back up over something no more my business than the man in the moon, but seems to me when it's a matter of right and wrong, or good and bad, or the like, thinks I, there's no choice but to go to work and fight.

That blasted foreman infuriated me. And I can swear when I have to. Well, I set to and gave him such a dressing down as you never heard.

I called him everything I ever heard and then I made up some more pretty ones for good measure.

I told him I'd have him up before the nearest district territorial judge for criminal negligence. I told him I was a personal friend of John J. Summerdown, the president of the new railroad, and I'd, by God, have his job so fast he wouldn't know what hit him. I told him that anybody'd stand by and let a man die instead of taking every chance there was to save him, I said was lower'n — Anyway, you can't go through medical school without picking up a few fancy words.

He cocked his elbows and fists at me a couple of times. But when I'm right, I know I'm right, and that's all you need to handle a peasant like that.

He got scared, and we both wiped the sweat off our brows at the same minute, the same gesture, and glared at each other, and I wondered if I looked as hot and messy and ignorant as he did, and I laughed.

The Mexicans were curious and asking questions and clawing at him. I turned around, like a nervous old maid, or a scared child, to see if the train was still there.

It had become a symbol of safety to me, the only way out of that yellow, yellow plain streaming with sunlight. Yes, it was still there, dusty black, and dusty white where the light rested.

The foreman talked to the men . . . there must have been about three dozen of them.

He may have been a fool but he was a crafty one.

He was talking in Mexican and telling them what I wanted to do to Pancho, their brother and friend. He pantomimed surgery — knife in fist and slash and finger-scissors and then grab at belly, and then tongue out, and eyes rolled out of sight, and slump, and dead man: all this very intently, like a child doing a child's powerful ritual of play.

'Oh, yo, yo, yo,' went all the Mexicans, and shook their fists at me, and showed their white teeth in rage. No sir, there'd be no cutting on Pancho!

'You see?' said the foreman, 'I told 'em what I had to do, and they won't have it.'

I am no actor, and certainly no orator, but I turned to those poor peons and tried to show them as best I could now the only way to save Pancho, lying there like a baked peanut, was to operate right now.

The foreman kept up a musical kind of antiphony to my arguments.

You know? It was something like the old lyric struggle between good and evil — enlightenment and superstition.

There we were, miles from everything, on that plain where the heat went up from the fried ground in sheets; nothing but a rickety line of tracks to keep us in the world, so to speak; and a struggle going on over the theory of life or death, as exemplified in the person of a perfectly anonymous wretch who'd eaten too many beans once too often!

I'd be damned if I'd quit.

I went back to the train and had more on my mind now than chivalry and Chaucer and Clouet.

She was still sitting there in her heavy starch and her yards and yards of black serge.

Her face was pink with the heat and her glasses a little moist. But she was like a calm and shady lake in that blistering wilderness,

and her hands rested like ferns on the itchy plush of the sea which gave off a miniature dust storm of stifling scent whenever anything moved on it.

I could hear the argument and mutual reinforcement in cries and threats going on and gathering force out there in the little mob. It was like the manifest sound of some part of the day, the heat, the desert life, which being disturbed now filled the quavering air with protest.

When I stopped in the aisle beside her, she looked up sideways. Of course, she didn't mean it to, but it looked sly and humorous, and her glasses flashed.

'Excuse me, Sister,' I said. 'Have you ever had any hospital experience?'

'Is some one ill?'

Her voice was oddly doleful, but not because she was; no, it had the faintest trace of a German tone, and her words an echo of German accent, that soft, trolling, ach-Gott-in-Himmel charm that used to be the language of the old Germany, a comfortable sweetness that is gone now.

'There's a Mexican laborer out there who's doubled up with appendicitis. I am a surgeon, by the way.'

'Yes, for a long time I was dietitian at Mount Mercy Hospital, that's in Clefeland?'

'Well, you see what I think I ought to do.'

'So, you should operate?'

'It's the only thing'd save him, and maybe that'll be too late.'

'Should we take him in the train and take care of him so? And operate when we reach town?'

Yes, you must see how placid she was, how instantly dedicated to the needs of the present, at the same time. She at once talked of what 'we' had to do. She owned responsibility for everything that came into her life. I was young then, and I'm an old man now, but I still get the same kind of pride in doctors and those in holy orders when they're faced with something that has to be done for somebody else. The human value, mind you.

'I don't think they'll let us touch him. They're all Mexicans, and scared to death of surgery. You should've heard them out there a minute ago.'

'Yess, I hear them now.'

'What I think we'd better do is get to work right here. The poor wretch wouldn't last the ride to Eddy, God knows how long the train'd take.'

'But *where*, doctor!'

'Well, maybe one of those sheds.'

'So, and the train would wait?'

'Oh! I don't know. I can find out.'

I went and asked the conductor up in the next car. He said no, the train wouldn't wait, provided they ever got a chance to go.

'We'd have to take a chance on the train,' I told Sister. 'Also, those men out there are not very nice about it. Maybe if you came out?'

At that she did hesitate a little; just a moment; probably the fraction it takes a celibate lady to adjust her apprehensions over the things she has heard about men, all of them, the very authors of sin, ancestors of misery, and custodians of the forbidden fruit.

'It would have been more convenient,' I said, 'if I'd never got off the train. That groaning little animal would die, and when the train went, we'd be on it; but we cannot play innocent now. The Mexican means nothing to me. Life is not that personal to a doctor. But if there's a chance to save it, you have to do it, I suppose.'

Her response to this was splendid. She flushed and gave me a terrific look, full of rebuke and annoyance at my flippancy. She gathered her great serge folds up in handfals and went down the car walking angrily. I followed her and together we went over to the shed. The sunlight made her weep a little and blink.

The men were by now sweating with righteous fury. Their fascinating language clattered and threatened. Pancho was an unpleasant sight, sick and uncontrolled. The heat was unnerving. They saw me first and made a chorus. Then they saw Sister and shut up in awe, and pulled their greasy hats off.

She knelt down by Pancho and examined him superficially and the flow of her figure, the fine robes kneeling in the dust full of ants, was like some vision to the Mexicans, in all the familiar terms of their Church. To me, it gave one of my infrequent glimpses into the nature of religious feeling.

She got up.

She turned to the foreman, and crossed her palms together. She was majestic and ageless, like any true authority.

'Doctor sayss there must be an operation on this man. He is very sick. I am ready to help.'

'W', lady,' said the foreman, 'you just *try* an' cut on that Messican and see what happens!'

He ducked his head toward the laborers to explain this.

She turned to the men. Calmly, she fumbled for her long rosary at her discipline and held up the large crucifix that hung on its end. The men murmured and crossed themselves.

'Tell them what you have to do,' she said to me coldly. She was still angry at the way I'd spoken in the train.

'All right, foreman, translate for me. Sister is going to assist me at an appendectomy. We'll move the man into the larger shed over there. I'd be afraid to take him to town, there isn't time. No: listen, this is better. What I *will* do: we could move him into the train, and operate while the train was standing still, and then let the train go ahead after the operation is over. That way, we'd get him to town for proper care!'

The foreman translated and pantomimed.

A threatening cry went up.

'They say you can't take Pancho off and cut on 'im on the train. They want him here.'

Everybody looked at Pancho. He was like a little monkey with eyes screwed shut and leaking tears.

The little corpus of man never loses its mystery, even to a doctor, I suppose. What it is, we are; what we are, must serve it; in anyone. My professor of surgery used to say, 'Hold back your pity till after the operation. You'll work better, and then the patient will be flattered to have it, and it might show up in the bill.'

'Very well, we'll operate here. Sister, are you willing to help me? It'll mean staying here till tomorrow's train.'

'Ja, doctor, of course.'

I turned to the foreman.

'Tell them.'

He shrugged and began to address them again.

They answered him, and he slapped his knee and h'yucked a kind of hound dog laugh in his throat and said to us,

'W', if you go ahead, these Messicans here say *they'll sure 'nough kill you if you kill Pancho!*'

Yes, it was worse than I could have expected.

This was like being turned loose among savages.

You might have thought the searing heat of that light steel sky had got everybody into fanciful ways.

'Why, that's ridiculous!' I said to him. 'He's nearly dead now! Osler himself might not save him! Nobody can ever guarantee an operation, but I can certainly guarantee that that man will die unless I take this one chance!'

'W', I dunno. See? That's what they *said*...

He waved at the Mexicans.

They were tough and growling.

Sister was waiting. Her face was still as wax.

'Can't you *explain*,' I said.

'Man, you never can 'splain *nothin*' to this crew! You better take the church lady there, and just get back on that train, that's what you better do!'

Well, there it was.

'You go to hell!' I said.

I looked at Sister. She nodded indignantly at me, and then smiled, sideways, that same sly look between her cheek and her lens, which she never meant that way; but from years of convent discretion she had come to perceive things obliquely and tell of them in whispers with many sibilants.

'Come on, we'll move him. Get some help there.'

The Mexicans wouldn't budge. They stood in the way.

'Give me your pistol!'

The foreman handed it over. We soon got Pancho moved.

Sister helped me to carry him.

She was strong. I think she must have been a farm girl from one of the German communities of the Middle West somewhere. She knew how to work, the way to lift, where her hands would do the most good. Her heavy thick robes dragged in the dust. We went into the tool shed and it was like strolling into a furnace.

I hurried back to the train and got my bags and then went back again for hers. I never figured out how she could travel with so little and be so clean and comfortable. She had a box of food. It was

conventional, in its odors, bananas, waxed paper, oranges, something spicy. Aside from that she had a little canvas bag with web straps binding it. I wondered what, with so little allowed her, she had chosen out of all the desirable objects of the world to have with her and to own.

My instrument case had everything we needed, even to two bottles of chloroform.

I got back into the dusty red shed by flashing the foreman's pistol at the mob. Inside I gave it back to him through the window with orders to keep control over the peasants.

What they promised to do to me if Pancho died began to mean something, when I saw those faces, like clever dogs, like smooth-skinned apes, like long-whiskered mice. I thought of having the engineer telegraph to some town and get help, soldiers, or something; but that was nervously romantic.

It was dark in the shed, for there was only one window. The heat was almost smoky there, it was so dim. There was a dirt floor. We turned down two big tool cases on their sides and laid them together. They were not quite waist high. It was our operating table.

When we actually got started, then I saw how foolish it was to try it, without any hospital facilities. But I remembered again that it was this chance or death for the little Mexican. Beyond that, it was something of an ethical challenge. Yes, we went ahead.

I remember details, but now so long after, maybe not in the right order.

I remember a particular odor, an oily smell of greasy sand, very powerful in the shed; the heat made the very dirt floor sweat these odors up, and they made me ill at ease in the stomach.

It was early afternoon. The sky was so still and changeless that it seemed to suspend life in a bowl of heat. The tin roof of the shed lowered a very garment of heat over us.

Faces clouded up at the window, to see: to threaten: to enjoy. We shook them away with the pistol. The foreman was standing in the doorway. Beyond him we had glimpses of the slow dancing silvery heat on the scratchy earth, and the diamond melt of light along the rails of the track.

The camp cook boiled a kettle of water.

Sister turned her back and produced some white rags from her petticoats.

She turned her heavy sleeves back and pinned her veils aside.

The invalid now decided to notice what was going on and he tried to sit up and began to scream.

Sister flicked me a glance and at once began to govern him with the touch of her hands, and a flow of comforting melody in *Deutsch* noises. I got a syringe ready with morphine. And the mob appeared at the door, yelling and kicking up the stifling dust which drifted in and tasted bitter in the nose.

I shot the morphine and turned around.

I began to swear.

That's all I recall; not *what* I said. But I said plenty. Pancho yelled back at his friends who would rescue him. It was like a cat concert for a minute or so.

Then the morphine heaved the little man down again, and he fell silent.

Then I shut up, and got busy with the chloroform. Sister said she could handle that. It was suddenly very quiet.

My instruments were ready and we had his filthy rags off Pancho. Sister had an instinctive adroitness, though she had never had surgical experience. Yet her hospital service had given her a long awareness of the sometimes trying terms of healing. In fascinated silence we did what had to be done before the operation actually started.

There was a locust, or a cicada, some singing bug outside somewhere, just to make the day sound hotter.

The silence cracked.

'He is dead!' they cried outside.

A face looked in at the window.

Now the threats began again.

I said to the foreman,

'Damn you, get hold of that crowd and make them shut up! You tell them he isn't dead! You tell them —'

I began to talk his language again, very fancy and fast. It worked on him. I never cussed so hard in my life.

Then I turned back and I took up my knife.

There's a lot of dramatic nonsense in real life; for example: my

hand was trembling like a wet dog, with that knife; and I came down near the incisionary area, and just before I made the first cut, steady? that hand got as steady as a stone!

I looked at Sister in that slice of a second, and she was biting her lips and staring hard at the knife. The sweat stood on her face and her face was bright red. Her light eyebrows were puckered. But she was ready.

In another second things were going fast.

I once told this story to someone, and later heard it repeated to someone else. I hardly recognized the events as my friend described them, because he made it all sound so dramatic and somehow like a scene in the opera, grand and full of high notes. No, it seems to me that the facts are more wonderful than all the things time and play-going can do to a person's imagination. The whole situation couldn't have been meaner; more dangerous from forces like dirt and stupidity, instead of forces like fate or fascinating Mexican bandits. There was the hazard, too, of my own youth, my inexperience as a surgeon. There was my responsibility for Sister, in case any trouble might start. There was the heat and a patient with temperature and no way to cool off boiled water in a hurry, and the dust rising through the cracks of the door and window and walls of the shed, as the outraged men kicked and shuffled outside. We could see the sheets of dusty light standing in the room's dusk, sliced from the gloom by a crack of that sunlight and its abstract splendor.

Oh, my surgery professor and my colleagues would've been shocked to see some of the things I did, and didn't do, that day!

I tried to hum a little tune instead of talk.

But now and then the noise outside would get worse.

Or the foreman would creak the door open and stick his varlet face in to peer.

Or the patient would almost swallow his tongue making a noise like a hot sleeping baby.

So I'd swear.

Sister said nothing all the time.

She obeyed my instructions. Her face was pale, from so many things that she wasn't used to — the odors, the wound, manipulation of life with such means as knives and skill, the strain of seeing Pancho weaken gradually; she was glassy with perspiration. Her

starched linen was melted. There was some intuitive machinery working between us. Aside from having to point occasionally at what I needed, things she didn't know the name of, I've never had a more able assistant at an operation in all my long life of practice.

I think it was because both she and I, in our professions, somehow belonged to a system of life which knew men and women at their most vulnerable, at times when they came face to face with the mysteries of the body and the soul, and could look no further, and needed help then.

Anyway, she showed no surprise. She showed none even at my skill, and I will admit that I looked at her now and then to see what she thought of my performance. For if I do say it myself, it was good.

She looked up only once, with a curious expression, and I thought it was like that of one of the early saints, in the paintings, her eyes filmed with some light of awareness and yet readiness, the hour before martyrdom; and this was when we heard the train start to go.

She looked rueful and forlorn, yet firm.

The engine let go with steam and then hooted with the exhaust, and the wheels ground along the hot tracks.

If I had a moment of despair, it was then; the same wavy feeling I'd had when the train had stopped here a couple of hours before.

The train receded in sound.

It died away in the plainy distance.

Shortly after there was a rush of voices and cries and steps toward the shack.

It was the laborers again, many of whom had been put back to work on the track ahead of the engine, in order to let the train proceed. Now they were done. Now they were crazy with menace.

It was about four o'clock, I suppose.

Fortunately, I was just finishing up. The door screeched on its shaken hinges and latch. I heard the foreman shouting at the men.

Then there was a shot.

'Most sacred Heart!' said Sister, on her breath, softly. It was a prayer, of course.

Then the door opened, and the foreman came in and closed it and leaned back on it.

He said they sent him in to see if Pancho were still living. I told

him he was. He said he had to see. I said he was a blankety-blank meddling and low-down blank to come bothering me now; but that I was just done, and if he had to smell around he could come.

I showed him the pulse in the little old Mexican's neck, beating fast, and made him listen to the running rapid breath, like a dog's.

Then he looked around.

He was sickened, first, I suppose; then he got mad. The place *was* dreadful. There were unpleasant evidences of surgery around, and the heat was absolutely weakening, and the air was stifling with a clash of odors. Sister had gone to sit on a box in the corner, watching. She, too, must have looked like a challenge, an alien force, to him.

He grew infuriated again at the mysterious evidences of civilization.

He began to wave his gun and shout that next time, by God, he'd fire on us, and not on them Messicans out yander. He declared that he, too, was agin cuttin' on anybody. He was bewildered and sick to his stomach and suffering most of all from a fool's bafflement.

He bent down and tried to grab back the meager sheeting and the dressing on Pancho's abdomen. He was filthy beyond words. I butted him with my shoulder (to keep my hands away and reasonably clean) and he backed up and stood glaring and his mouth, which was heavy and thick, sagged and contracted in turn, like loose rubber.

Sister came forward and without comment, knelt down by the wretched operating table which might yet be, for all I knew, a bier, and began to pray, in a rich whisper, full of hisses and soft impacts of r's upon her palate, and this act of hers brought some extraordinary power into the room; it was her own faith, of course; her own dedication to a simple alignment of life along two channels, one leading to good, the other to evil.

I was beginning to feel very tired.

I had the weakness after strain and the almost querulous relief at triumph over hazard.

I'd been thinking of her all along as a woman, in spite of her ascetic garb, for that was natural to me then. Now for the first time, listening to her pray, I was much touched, and saw that she was like a doctor who thinks enough of his own medicine to take some when he needs a lift.

The foreman felt it all too, and what it did to him was to make him shamle sullenly out of the shed to join the enemy.

We watched all night.

It got hardly any cooler.

Late at night Sister opened her lunch box with little delicate movements and intentions of sociability, and we made a little meal.

I felt intimate with her.

I had a sense of what, together, we had accomplished, and over and over I tried to feel her response to this. But none came. We talked rather freely of what we still had to do, and whether we thought the Mexicans *meant* it, and whether the train crew knew what was going on, and if they'd report it when they reached Eddy.

We had an oil lamp that the foreman gave us.

When I'd get drowsy, my lids would drop and it seemed to me that the flame of the wick was going swiftly down and out; then I'd jerk awake and the flame would be going on steadily, adding yet another rich and melancholy odor to our little surgery.

I made Sister go to sleep, on her corner box, sitting with her back against the wall.

She slept in state, her hands folded, her body inarticulated under the volume of her robes, which in the dim lamplight looked like wonderful masses carved from some dark German wood by trolls of the Bavarian forests... so fancifully ran my mind through that vigil.

I saw morning come, like a cobweb, on the little window; then steal the whole sky that I could see; and then just as a flavor of cool sweetness had begun to lift into the air off the plains, the sun appeared (rapidly, I thought, but then it was I, not the sun, whose fever hurried life along that day).

Early that day Pancho became conscious.

We talked to him and he answered.

He was enclosed in the mystery of pain and the relief of weakness.

When he identified Sister by her habit, he tried to cross himself, and she smiled and crowed at him and made the sign of the cross over him herself.

I examined him carefully, and he was all right. He had stood the shock amazingly well. It was too early for infection to show to any degree, but I began to have a certain optimism, a settling of the

heart. It had come off. I began to think the day was cooler. You know: the sweetness over everything that seems to follow a feeling of honest satisfaction.

Then the crowd got busy again.

They saw Pancho through the window, his eyes open, his lips moving, smiling faintly, and staring at Sister with a child's wonder toward some manifest loveliness, hitherto known only in dream and legend.

In a second they were around at the door, and pushing in, babbling like children, crying his name aloud, and eager to get at him and kiss him and gabble and marvel and felicitate.

They were filthy and enthusiastic, flowing like life itself toward that which feeds it. They were, then, infection personified.

I shouted at them and made them stay back. I let them see Pancho, but from a distance of three feet.

He spoke to them, thinly, and they cried 'Aiee!' with astonishment, and nodded their heads as if sagely, and blinked their eyes at me, ducking their little bodies in homage. They couldn't have been more friendly now. They went yes-yes, and my-my, and how wonderful to have such a man! and he is my friend, and so forth.

But their very presence was dangerous, for they kicked up the dirt floor, and they hawked and spat on their words, and I finally put them out.

The foreman's mood was opposite to theirs.

He was now surly and disgruntled that we had pulled it off successfully.

He knew, as I had known, that the Mexicans really would kill if Pancho died.

We had the unpleasant impression that he felt cheated of a diverting spectacle.

We watched Pancho carefully all morning; he grew uncomfortable as the heat arose. But then, so did we. It rose and rose, and the bugs sang, and the tin roof seemed to hum too, but that must have been dramatic imagination. I had all our plans made. When the noon train came along, we would flag it, and carefully move Pancho on board, and take him down the valley to Eddy, where he could spend two weeks in the company hospital.

Mid-morning, I stepped outside and called the men together and the foreman, and made them a speech. Now they had their hats off,

listening to me. Their little eyes couldn't have looked more kindly and earnest. *Sure*, I could take Pancho off on the train. *Sure*, they wanted him to get well. *By all means* the señor medico must do what he thought best. So with a great show of love for them, I shook hands with myself at the little mob, feeling like a gifted politician.

The train finally arrived, and as it first showed, standing down the tracks in the wavering heat, it looked like a machine of rescue.

There was only one more thing there.

When we went to take Pancho on the train, the foreman refused to help.

'I won't he'p you,' he declared. 'I ain't got no authority t' move none of my men, and I won't he'p you.'

I picked out two of the less earthy natives and they helped me to bring the patient on board the train. We carried him on a camp cot. It belonged to the foreman. When he saw that, he got so mad he threw down his hat and jumped on it. The dust flew. His fish-white brow broke into sweat. Then he came running to stop us. We barely got Pancho on the train in time, and the door closed and latched. It was a state of siege until the train went again. It must have been ten minutes. Fortunately I'd brought my bags on board the first thing, and Sister's.

We finally pulled out.

We looked out the rear window, and saw our desert hospital recede into the slow pulsing glassy air.

We could see the little figures, most of them waving.

Just at the last, one of them held forth his arm, and we saw a puff of smoke, and heard an explosion in our imaginations, and then heard the actual ring and sing-off of a bullet as it struck the rear of the car.

It was the foreman's farewell, the last, and futile, opinion of the ignorant.

The afternoon passed slowly in the train.

The heat and the dust were hard on everyone, and especially Pancho. I kept wetting down the cracks of the windows, and the doors, to keep the dust out if I could.

But soon the water was gone, and we had to sit there and hope.

We reached Eddy in the evening, and it was like a garden, after the endless plains and their sear life. We found green trees and artesian wells and fields of alfalfa.

There is little more to tell, and what there is, is not about Pancho, except that he made a recovery in the proper time.

It is about my saying good-by to Sister.

It seemed to me we had been through a good deal together.

Now we were going to separate, for she was taking a stage-coach from Eddy on down into Texas somewhere, and I was going to stay a few days and see my patient out of the woods.

So we said good-by in the lobby of the wooden hotel there, where she was going to spend the night.

Nobody knew what a good job I had done except Sister, and after we shook hands, and I thanked her for her wonderful help, I waited a moment, just a little moment.

She knew I was nervous and tired, and it was vanity of course, but I needed the little lift she could give me.

But she didn't say anything, while I waited, and then as I started to turn off and go, she did speak.

'I will pray for you, doctor.'

'What?'

'That you may overcome your habit of profanity.'

She bowed and smiled in genuine kindness, and made her way to the stairs and disappeared.

Duty is an ideal and it has several interpretations, and these are likely to be closely involved with the character that makes them.

You might say that Sister and I represented life eternal and life temporal.

I never saw her again, of course, but if she's still alive, I have no doubt that she's one of the happiest people in the world.

THE GIRL WITH THE FLAXEN HAIR ¹

By MANUEL KOMROFF

(From *Esquire*)

EVERY week the proud haughty mannequins were removed from the Fifth Avenue windows of the department store and dressed fresh and new. All week long they stood stiffly exhibiting the very latest creations.

Tweeds, ball gowns, ensembles, tea-gowns, sport-suits, evening wraps and fluffy negligees from week to week adorned the tall slim mannequins. Sometimes plaids, sometimes velvets or chiffons. Now a new Paris creation and now a touch of ermine or sable; such is the life of a poor girl made of wax and glass and a supple body stuffed with upholstery. Her wooden jointed arms and legs never tire. And the quiet smile on her face never alters. Summer or winter, rain or wind, a war in Europe or a boom in Wall Street, nothing can ruffle these proud creatures. Here is real detachment from worldly things — with a touch of ermine on the side. One could really fall madly in love with such a girl. And this really happened.

The bookkeeper of Marsh, Fifth Avenue, was terribly lonely. There was nothing new each week in his life. It was all the same thing, columns and columns, ledgers and journals, invoices and bills, day after day. For eight years he was never late, never sick, never out to lunch when he shouldn't be and never fully caught up with his work. Often, very often indeed, he stayed late to finish up those terribly important figures that are thrown in the executive's waste basket the next morning.

And this miserable drudge, almost forty, without a family, without a home, with a big lumpy nose and red eyelids, discolored teeth, with a walk of mincing steps; this timid creature, owner of a cotton umbrella and a green faded mackintosh — he was the one who fell madly in love with the flaxen haired mannequin. Because of the proud tilt of her head, because of her high chin and her spirited

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glance, the flaxen haired mannequin was the one usually reserved for the smartest Paris evening gowns. She had the carriage of cold Fifth Avenue arrogance, sleek as a race horse, and looked capable of high-hatting the snobbiest of the snobs. And the love that took place between this flaxen haired beauty and that humble bookkeeper, Joshua Bogg, was a very serious affair and very beautiful.

For weeks the torment in his nature grew until unable to stand it any longer he eloped with the flaxen haired mannequin. He freed her from the slavery of a shop window. And he did it so neatly that no one ever knew what became of her. And no bureau of missing persons would have been able to find her. The department store had been closed for some time and Joshua Bogg was working late. Then came his chance. He pulled the cord that drew the window curtain and taking the lady gently by the arm led her to the rear door. He hailed a taxi and in another minute they were gone, gone to . . .

'Drive us through the park.'

The flaxen haired girl sat very stiffly and Joshua held her arm and supported her. But he held her too lightly and when they rounded a curve she toppled over and her cold face touched his cheek.

'Take it easy, driver,' he said. Then assisting her back in the cushions he said very softly, 'I'm sorry my dear.'

'You know my darling,' he whispered, 'it is very nice to ride through the park in the quiet of the evening and have someone beautiful to sit beside you, someone whom you admire and love. Oh, it's very nice.'

After they had gone around the park — an expensive ride for a bookkeeper — he directed the driver to take them home. 'You won't mind my dear. I am anxious to show you my room. I live all alone and there will be no one to bother us. And perhaps you will like it there and I will keep you for my own. And perhaps you will like me and then, then. . . Anyway you will be glad to be away from the terrible show window and all those people, hundreds and hundreds of people who stare at you every minute of the day. Oh, it must be terrible. At least if I cannot give you the fine things you are accustomed to I can do one thing and that is to save you from such a life. And I will shield you from rude glances and protect you from the hurly-burly mob. Truly I will do this and you can depend on it. And when you know me better you will know that I am a person of great honor.'

Soon they arrived at the rooming house where he lived. He helped her up the stair, opened the door and snapped on the light. 'Here is where we live, my darling. I hope you will like it.'

He made her comfortable in the only good chair and at once set to work tidying up the room. 'In just a minute, my dear, it will all look like a different place.' He worked very hard and in a short time the whole room was transformed and the odd bits of furniture rearranged.

'There,' he said, 'it is better. Tomorrow I will have the curtains washed and then you will not know the place.'

He sat down. It had been a full day and he had been carried along by the excitement. First the plot to steal the beautiful model, then its execution, then the ride in the park and now. . . . It was late, about ten o'clock and he had not yet had his supper.

'I will open a can of soup,' he said to the flaxen haired mannequin, 'and you will watch me eat.'

As he was preparing this simple meal over the gas stove he turned about and with great enthusiasm said, 'Oh, if I only had someone like you to work for. Someone who liked me. This place would be so different, so very different.'

When he was finished eating he cleared away the plates and came and sat down beside her.

'You know my dear, I have a confession to make to you. I have worked eight years in that place and I was never late, and I was never sick and every month the auditors come and look over my books and they never find a single penny in the wrong column. And you know, I'll tell you something. I haven't had a raise in four years. Now that's a long time. And you know the reason for it? Well I do. The reason for it is. . . . You see my darling I am Joshua Bogg. Fourteen years I worked in the last place and now eight here. And they know that Joshua Bogg is only Joshua Bogg. And he is never late and never sick. He is almost part of the furniture in the office. And his hair is thin on top and he's got a big lumpy nose and so where will he go? Nowhere. And what's the good of giving him a raise because he is not going to run away anyway. Yes, that is what I found out from Miss Dickenson our Paris buyer. I asked her why she thinks they don't give me a raise and she looked at me and said, "Just because you are Joshua Bogg, that's all." And I realized it then. She was right. She has a good head on her shoulders and is a

real decent person. And that gown you are now wearing — she is certain to miss it. But I can't help it. . . . Well, and now what would they say if they saw us here together! And who would ever believe that Joshua Bogg could have the courage to . . . Do you know, my dear, I have stolen you and now Joshua Bogg who was never late and never had a penny in the wrong column, he is a thief. A plain thief! And he doesn't give a damn! Excuse me, my dear. I did not mean to swear in your presence but my emotions got the better of me. I promise not to do it again.'

He touched her hand apologetically. 'Forgive me, my dear.'

This timid soul, Joshua Bogg, rarely swore and he never drank and he had no real bad habits. But now he was happy and he thought lightly of the crime he had committed. He got out his pipe and lit it up and looked at the flaxen haired mannequin and smiled. She was very beautiful.

'You know my dear, I am not only a thief but I am also guilty of a more serious crime — abduction. And you know what the penalty for that is? Years and years in prison. But what of it? In prison I could keep the books. And I would never be late or never sick. And the auditors would come every month and say the same thing. "Not a penny in the wrong column." And I would have just as good soup there as I have here. And so it would be quite the same except that I would not have you close to me. And that is a lot because a man needs some beauty and tenderness and he needs someone to talk to. It was very lonely here before you came and now I am a thief, but I am much happier.'

He put a screen around his cot and behind this he undressed and went to bed. He was very happy.

He whistled as he went to work in the morning and he hummed lightly to himself as he sat at his high desk. After a while he threw down the pen and walked boldly into the manager's office.

'I would like to ask you for a few hours off this afternoon if you could spare me,' he said. 'I want to draw a little money from my savings and buy myself a new suit and new shoes. And if I still have time I might pick out one of those five dollar felt hats that are on display in the men's shop. A pearl grey one.'

This was the first time in eight years Joshua Bogg had ever asked for an hour or two off. The manager was pleased to grant the request and that afternoon the bookkeeper bought himself a new

suit, new shoes and a pearl grey felt hat. He took the hat and shoes with him but the suit had to have some alterations and he could not have it until next day.

Nothing had been said all day about the missing mannequin and when closing time came he got out as early as he could and went straight for the place where he knew the most beautiful girl in the whole world was waiting for him.

He burst into the room. 'My darling,' he said. 'Did you miss me? See, I have something to show you. How does this hat look? And here. I have new shoes. And tomorrow my new suit will be ready. You will not be ashamed of me darling. It's about time I got myself brushed up a bit. Been waiting for the raise all the time but now. . . . Now I am in love and I can't wait a moment longer. And I am so happy to find someone home to talk to. Before you came it was terribly lonely here and you know what loneliness is. But how could you know darling, for all your life you have been surrounded by admiring crowds. But last night we were alone. And here it is quiet and peaceful. It's a good rest you will have. And tomorrow when I come home in my new suit I will bring you something nice and you will sit at the table with me while I have supper.'

Later that evening he confessed again to the beautiful flaxen haired girl. He told her about his most uneventful past and how he started as an office boy and studied bookkeeping in a night school. And how twice he tried to study to rise to a certified accountant like those fellows who come in once a month and never find a penny in the wrong column. Twice he began this course but he was discouraged because. . . . Well there seemed no use in it and he had nobody to work for and if he worked for himself he would only be working for Joshua Bogg. And Joshua Bogg is only Joshua Bogg. But now it was different and now he would take it up again because. . . .

'Because I can talk to you. Because I feel you understand what lies behind those empty words that a man says. Because I tell you everything and you will know that everything I tell you will be the truth. And you know, darling, I tell you things I would not dream of telling anyone. That has been my whole trouble. I live in my shell. And that is why the girls in the store — we have three hundred and fifty, almost one for each day in the year — they never

look at me. And no one has ever asked me to a party or anywhere. But they are wrong. They judge a man only from the outside and they don't take the trouble to see what kind of heart beats inside of him. And they make fun of my old green mackintosh and my cotton umbrella. But they will be sorry. When they learn that I am loved by the most beautiful girl in the whole world then they will sit up and take notice. Won't they darling? And you do love me? Of course you do. I adore you and that is why I risked all to save you from the terrible slavery of a plate glass window. From the thousands of scrutinizing eyes that look you up and down and pierce through you. And I would do it again. Because these gaping people have no right to you and I have, because I love you. And I love you with great tenderness and not in any cheap way. You fill a place that is vacant in my nature and with you close I feel more complete; more a really full person. And do you know I have suddenly become quite bold. This morning I threw down my pen and breezed right into the manager's office. Not for a moment did I hesitate to ask for what I wanted. And did I stand there stammering timidly? Not a bit of it! And if my request had not been granted I was ready to snap my fingers right in his face and say "That for you!"

He walked up and down proudly as he related the above to the beautiful flaxen haired mannequin. He snapped his fingers to illustrate how he would have done it. Pleased with himself, he snapped them again and again making a sharp sudden crack that seemed louder than anything that had ever issued from this timid bookkeeper, who for years lived in fear of his own shadow. He was surprised at what a loud crack his fingers could really make.

And that night he dreamed of the beautiful flaxen haired girl who was so arrogant and so proud. He dreamed that she came to his bed and sat beside him and her long beautiful fingers stroked his forehead and combed his hair. And she spoke in a very soft and musical voice and said, 'Darling, my own sweet boy. I love you so. All day long I wait for your return and I see your sweet face before me always. I am so happy to be with you and so happy that you took me away from that horrid place. And you think I am only wax and straw but I am not. And you thought I was speechless but now you know that your warm affection has changed me inside completely. You hear I can talk; and you see I can walk and there is real

blood in my veins and I have a heart that beats warmly for you. And the girl you have saved has become a real person and she loves you because you also have become a real person.'

He woke up suddenly and turned on the light for it all seemed so real he could not believe it a dream. But it was a dream and the flaxen haired mannequin sat stiffly in her chair. He sighed and turned out the light but found it difficult to get to sleep again for the words he heard in the dream were echoing in his ears. And it was so hard to separate the truth from the fantastic. Was it really true that now he had become a real person? How does one prove that you are a real person?

He walked to work the next morning with a very lively step. He straightened out his humped shoulders and walked into the entrance of the department store with an air that made you think the place belonged to him.

'Just look at Joshua Bogg,' he heard one of the salesgirls remark.

He turned slightly, snapped his fingers at whoever it was — he didn't even care — and went on into the office where he banged the books down on his desk and began his work.

A stenographer who worked in the same office looked up and said to her neighbor, 'I wonder what's ever gotten into him.'

Hearing this remark he looked up rather casually and again snapped his fingers. The girls looked at each other in surprise.

Everyone could see that Joshua Bogg was very happy. He hummed lightly to himself and went to the telephone and called the fifth floor, for this was where men's suits are sold in the store. 'Be sure and let me know the moment my suit is ready. I want to put it on.'

And this was not all, for when he went home that evening besides the new hat, new shoes and new suit he carried in his hand a large bouquet of flowers for his sweetheart, the beautiful flaxen haired mannequin. He put the flowers in her lap and turned around several times to show her how his suit fitted in the back.

'There now,' he said, 'how do you like it?'

Then he filled a jar with water and arranged the flowers on the table before them. 'There are things in the world that are very beautiful but we don't pay enough attention to them,' he remarked. 'You know you really spoil me darling. Because of you I see beauty in everything.'

And once more he cooked his little supper and chatted gayly about all sorts of things. He told her what happened in the office and how the girls were talking about him and that he merely snapped his fingers at them.

'I wonder why it is, darling, that love makes a man so indifferent to those little yapping remarks; and so independent too. That is why love is beautiful and what you said last night was true. It makes you a real person. And at first I didn't understand it but now I do.'

The news that Joshua Bogg was no longer Joshua Bogg — the girls understood very well what this meant — spread through the entire department store from attic to basement. It meant that Joshua Bogg was no longer the owner of a cotton umbrella and the old green mackintosh. These would no longer fit his new condition. It was evident at a glance that Joshua Bogg was now quite a different man. But nobody in the whole place could account for the change.

The manager heard his secretary remark to a filing clerk, 'It's about time Joshua Bogg got himself a new suit. If he waited for his raise he would be running around in rags.' What about the book-keeping department? Was Joshua Bogg a forgotten man? He rang his bell.

'Will you please find out when Joshua Bogg had his last raise?'

She looked in a book and came back with the reply: 'Four years.'

'How do you account for his being overlooked?'

The girl smiled. 'I guess because he is just Joshua Bogg. He was too timid to ask for one.'

'Well that is strange, I never thought of him before. Ask him to come here. I want to see him.'

Joshua Bogg in his new suit and shoes, with his head high and a little saucy twinkle in his eye, he must have learnt this from the beautiful flaxen haired mannequin, walked boldly into the office.

'Mr. Bogg,' began the manager, 'you have not had a raise for four years. But as times are a shade better now...'

'Excuse me for interrupting you. I quite understand no matter what the reason. Only I want to point out to you one thing, and that is that the auditors have never found a penny in the wrong column. Mistakes are costly and for eight years you have had none. Therefore, unless you are proposing to give me a very sub-

stantial and generous raise, I would rather have none at all. This may sound rather bold to you, but if I am entitled to it I will be pleased to have it and appreciate it. If I am not entitled to it then I certainly do not want it. I am very happy to remain as I am.'

This was an unexpected and bold stroke indeed. Especially to come from a timid drudge who was never late and never sick.

The manager scratched his head and said, 'Let me take this under consideration and I hope to let you know this afternoon.'

The manager consulted with one of the company directors and it was decided that Joshua Bogg should have a fifteen dollar raise and two weeks extra vacation. This was because of the fact that the auditors never found a penny in the wrong column and because of eight years of service. At least this was the reason given. But the girls whispered that it was because he got himself some new clothes, and those upstairs in the office said that it was because Joshua Bogg was no longer Joshua Bogg — reason unknown. But...

'Darling, it's all because of you!' and he embraced the flaxen haired mannequin when he got home that evening. And he danced around the room and gave the flowers on the table fresh water. And this was the start of a new life for Joshua Bogg.

Now things began moving terribly fast. He received a present of a silk umbrella from Miss Dickenson, the Paris buyer. And he brought it home and showed it to the flaxen haired beauty.

'You see, my darling, I tell you everything. Miss Dickenson gave me this but she made me promise to throw out the old bulging cotton one. She said it made me look like an old man from the moon or something antique. And Miss Dickenson — Dorothy is her first name — said I must take her out to lunch because she wants me to go to Bermuda for the two weeks and stay at the little place she knows. She said she was very happy that the main office had recognized my services at last. She has had to fight for every raise she has had. You know dear, I think Dorothy leads a very interesting life. Twice a year she goes to Paris to bring back the very latest. And only today she told me that they couldn't find any trace of that evening gown with the blue trimming and metalized bodice. She said it was one of the loveliest models she brought over and it has suddenly disappeared. But I did not let on that I knew anything about it. That's the gown you are wearing now. It's a good joke isn't it darling?'

Later he spoke some more about Dorothy and before he went to bed that night he suddenly looked up and said, 'Darling, I wish you'd be frank with me. Tell me exactly what you feel. Do you like staying here with me? Isn't it very lonesome for you all day long before I get back? Tell me the truth. Would you rather I brought you back to the show window where you would have gay crowds and the Fifth Avenue life that you are part of and know so well? I wouldn't have you lonesome for the world. I know what a terrible thing it is to be lonesome. And I would do anything for you.'

Yes, he decided that so great a beauty must be shared with the world. Besides there was the gown that Dorothy had herself selected. And he could not very well return the gown and leave the flaxen haired mannequin naked in his room. He decided it would be best to take her back.

In the morning when the porter unlocked the doors there stood the mannequin waiting to return to her place. He could hardly believe his eyes. He rubbed them and blinked and again he looked at the flaxen haired girl. A morning paper was wedged under her arm. And this only made it all the harder to explain.

'Well, young lady,' said the porter. 'Where have you been all week? You just come and go as you please do you? We will soon put a stop to that. Come inside, I must report you. Been out raising hell, I bet!'

The flaxen haired beauty was taken to the basement and shamelessly her Paris gown was removed from her and she was dressed with something different. It was reported to the office that she was back.

When Joshua Bogg was going out to lunch with Dorothy to find out all about Bermuda and she was saying, 'I wish I were going along,' he glanced into the show window and there stood the radiant mannequin dressed in a smart tweed sport suit. There was a glassy twinkle in her eye and a smile on her wax coral lips.

Joshua Bogg, now a real person and a happy one, no longer the Joshua Bogg of old, tipped his pearl grey hat to his flaxen haired beauty. He was a gentleman and nobody would ever know from his lips the details of his affair with the beautiful mannequin.

AWAKENING AND THE DESTINATION¹

By DAVID E. KRANTZ

(From *American Prefaces*)

UP, UP, one step at a time, plunk-plunk wearily, oh, the Monday morning blues — rings under your eyes, the gray coffee in your gullet and the toast dry in your mouth. Up, up, landing and stair, with somebody's rump in your face and your shoes clopping dust in a man's eyes. A chain of monotonous souls to the sky, up to a finer place, a blue spaciousness, the sky I said, up, up . . . and you're one of a thousand and more who's paid his 1971 nickel and is waiting for the *City Hall Local*. You're jammed in — the black solidness, the yielding hardness of the crowd, and you're tired and disgusted and maybe you don't notice that boy and girl right in front of you. She's only a child with a strained face, and look! a gray hair or two, and the boy is a boy too, must've gone to high-school a few years ago. She's pretty in a way with a — Did you notice she's wearing a wedding band on her left hand? . . .

Boys in blue sweaters, with an orange *H* or an *M* and a '38, and bio texts under their arms, shoving good-naturedly, this is all fun, so let's give 'em the shift formation with a one-two *hipl* and we'll slam our way into the cars. Crowded you say? We'll *smash* our way in! with a huff 'nd a puff 'nd a . . . and here are the *high* girls with that virgin look on them and smears of paint on their pretty little lips, and their hard little breasts, and the heat of awakening, and longing desire in their young blood and eyes, conscious of the nearness of a man, and wishing him to edge closer, closer . . . so call it ugliness, but it's flesh they're made of, and wanting, and seeing Claudette Colbert on a divan gives them ideas, but you're not forgetting the rich, brown soil, and the seed, and the sun and the bud, and the rain and the flowering, and the mighty straining towards life and living (and maybe a little sadness too, in good time), and the awakening in the inchoate dawn, the stirring and glorious might of birth, the awakening . . .

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and the grim, silent laborers with the grimy hands and the stale sweat of the earth . . .

. . . She called him Barry, but there was no reason for it. She thought of it one night when they were coming out of a movie, and she'd used it ever since. He used to get sore, for his name was Al, but she used to moan and hiss it *Barry, Barry!* when she was loving him hard. Then he blushed when she called him that in public. (The soft-hard whiteness of her beside him in the creamy dark, her long thin legs) . . . He tried to think of a pet name for her but it never worked somehow — her name was Marion.

When she got that selling job at the big store all her friends were envious. Sunnie wrapped bundles in a Union Square dress-shop forty, fifty hours a week, for twelve dollars and a box of chocolates at Christmas; and Marion with no experience, starting at sixteen per and commission on total sales — it came to nineteen, and come to think of it, that was money all right. And she'd gotten the job by standing with her head high in front of Miss Keyes, saying, Give me a job in the restaurant, washing dishes, cleaning floors, or anything. Give me . . . please . . . Miss Keyes saying, I like your spunk — you're going to sell for us, what do you know about sheets and pillow-cases? . . .

You can't read your paper, waiting for the train to pull into the station any minute, and that girl in front of you, a cheap wedding-band on her . . . Is she *really* married? Why, she's not more than a child, talking to that young boy, her *husband?* asking him, You don't think we'll get seats, Barry, you . . . He shakes his head, It's Monday and crowded. Her shoulders lightly touch your tie and you can't read your paper, and a curly-haired, hatless boy guffaws into the blue sky this Monday morning, and a girl with a red hat giggles.

. . . and the other girls in her department liked her from the start, for even girls will like a pretty one if she's quiet, and younger than they, and sweet as Marion was, and tall and anxious. And she learned how to fold sheets, and hold them, and pile them up with no creasing, and sell them, saying sweetly, These pillow-cases are made to match, Madame . . .

I wish I could get a seat, she says, I'm so tired, and she leans on you unknowing, and looks up to where there is a mocking quiet bespeaking a lasting peace, the depth and density of blueness, and

maybe a pigeon or two, or a flock if you have the patience to look, and the lazy winging, the graceful winging.

You went to sleep early; you oughtn't to be tired. I'm not tired.

Gee, I wish I could get a seat. Barry, will I have to stand all the way down to Brooklyn Bridge?

But if you went to sleep early you shouldn't —

There's the train . . . that weary, melancholy young voice of her. A gray hair or two, and a wedding-band.

. . . that Christmas she earned Eight Dollars in commission and she went out and bought a pink dress, and then with Sunnie to a place in Long Island where everybody proceeded to get drunk — it being New Year's Eve — and noisy and sloppy, and the tall Irish boys over from Yorkville, with their bloodshot, wild eyes, trying to paw her, and a voice saying in her ear, Let's get out of this damned stew. My name's Al . . .

A sweating and grunting and gasping, a solid mass of flesh and muscle and bone, a viscid mass of panting, smelly breath and fresh perfume, and the curve of soft breast, and sponginess of flabby breast, and angular bone and the long sweep of spine, and somebody's elbow in your ribs, and a girl's black purse pressed to your heart. Shove if you wanna get in, *sh-ovel*! Oh, you're being folded and beaten thin . . . and a hand, a chin, a lot of fluffy hair, a white neck and a girl's buttocks . . . but you ain't getting in so plant your feet and let 'em have it, b'Jesus! and shove, shove . . . and what if the high-school girls squeal, and the boys holler football signals — they've *got* to get in, with a chem test waiting and Darwin's evolution theories to memorize, and basketball and sprinting in the gym, and the early-English course with Chaucer's expurgated tales, and the Franco-Prussian wars, and a little headachy Latin and four years of French . . . the preparation, you see, the slow ripening for this business of living, the girding of young loins, and soon, the maturation, the final burgeoning and efflorescence into the yellow sun, and the mighty screaming of the young, the power and song of it! The awakening, the awakening . . . and look at that anemic young clerk with the pencil-line moustache having the wind knocked out of him, lost helplessly in the thickness of crowd — you can see he isn't used to it — brother, you've got to be *hard* and firm, you've got to *fight* to get on, and you — Oh, please stop it, *stop* it — you're *hurting* me! . . . Can't help it, sister, they're pushin' behind me.

and the chunky, solid men with the blue shirts and the stumpy fingers, the rough-shaven faces and the knobby arms like thick cudgels hewn from healthy trees. The root of this mighty land; the clay feet planted deep like radishes in the loam, and the trunky bodies, and the solid, heavy shoulders rising . . . rising for others' greatness, those solid weights for whole families to lean on . . . and this boy took her home, and because the hour was late she slept on his shoulder in the train, and it was the craziest mob, wearing colored paper-hats and blowing tin horns, and many of them going to mix in with the Times Square crowds till dawn, singing and shouting and drunk and slobbery . . . Happy New Year! we say, and somebody's girl puked right in the middle of the crowd and how they cursed and scattered, and the smell oh it was terrible! and Al leading her out on the platform of the train, and that poor girl still retching awfully with someone's hand on her forehead, and the smell and disgust and nausea.

Her mother came in on them, wearing that torn gray robe she'd had for six years, and Marion ashamed to tears . . . but her mother liked this boy because he could make her laugh, and politely he answered that he worked in that insurance company downtown . . .

You're in at last, the cold door against your spine and still the feel of the guard's fists on your shoulders, cramming you in by hard inches, and the motion and dampness this fresh morning, the glad-some treasure of a glimpse of blueness flashing patiently by the train windows, the growing fatigue this morning and your sunken cheeks. And that young married couple in front of you, his arm around her waist, and consequently mashed into your stomach, but that's his right, brother, so her head is on your chest, and think, brother, isn't she too young to be married, too thin kind of, and that gray hair, and the other; think brother, she's young and he's young, and what's that they say about youth and hope, and the strength of youth, the undying bravado of it, the courage and glory of it? But you can't open your paper, you can't even scratch your nose, you can't get your handkerchief. And there's reading if you want it; look up to the little colored truisms in green and red and gold.

Learn what Mrs. Smithson of Kansas does for a cold and cough; make your teeth white as snow in six applications. A doctor, you say? If your indigestion is bad see what to drink; constipated? then let this magic globule gut your bowels; breath mephitic, gargle

with this — a doctor you say, with his three dollars a visit? Is your skin eruptive, this's the ointment to apply, and a drop of this and your corn's gone, and if you've no time for lunch this hunk of chocolate with peanuts will take the place of lunch, and listen, if you're fat, you've a choice of two tablets or bath salts, and don't forget that gum is *good* for you!

Sound View, Whillock Avenue, and Longwood . . . and how it's been done you don't know, but others have squeezed in behind you, and here you thought there wasn't any more room! But there's talk in the air, and a laugh, and an exaggerated groan . . . and somebody's wondering out loud what time it is . . . '43rd and *Cypress Avenue* and '33rd, and keep praying that when you change at 125th you'll find a seat on the *Express* and a chance to find out what Hitler is doing for the Jews, what that stock closed at you once owned, and what's the matter with those Giants anyway.

and the brawn, and glum, lumpy, heedless defiance of that man over there, and this one, with the dinner-pail in his hand. They'll be gripping their picks soon and throwing them into the tarry gutters, tearing them up to make newer gutters, and chipping those curb-stones flat and straight with musical chisels, and heaving their gnarled muscles through the monotonous hours, pounding, pounding.

. . . three years she went out with him, and they'd gotten engaged, and he'd closed out his thrift-account to buy her a diamond ring, a beauty with two blue chips on the side and real platinum — how it sparkled under the light — and that was around Christmas, and in January, Barry took a forced vacation and when he came back was unctuously told . . . business bad . . . laying off . . . new ones got to go first . . . you understand . . . and we got you on the list, and when it picks up in a couple of months, you understand . . .

In a couple of months Marion was paying for their movies, and for an occasional dance at the *Y*, and for his *Sunday Times* so's he could read and answer the want-ads, sitting with him and helping him compose his replies, *Dear Sir*, . . . and wish to state that I'd very much appreciate an interview, and all those nickels and dimes for fare. But most of the time they went to the park and sat by the lake at night and wondered how it was all going to end; or sat listening to the radio, wondering how it was all going to end, and here they were dying to get married, wanting each other like hell and going

nuts with the whole business. Ah, but Barry was tall and strong and cared for her, and if he could only get a job, anything even ten dollars a week so long as it was *something!*

and Marion standing on her feet eight and nine hours each day, selling sheets and beginning to look haggard, the fresh bloom of a sweet girl in love, you'd say, and her feet beginning to bother her with funny swellings under the white, dead skin of the soles . . .

But Jesus Christ, I'm in at last! Twenty a week, kid, and the boss said it's a start and I can work my way up in the business — a small office on Fourth Avenue, real estate — the boss said, and don't watch the clock and be punctual, my son, be here on time

and they were married one day . . .

The subway roars in your ears, the groan of underearth, the sickness of gloomy interment, and the unspeaking torture . . . and you're being crushed by ribs and breasts and shoulders and thighs, decorously clothed in wools and serges and silks, and there's a boy there slammed up to a nigger-girl, both of them breathing with the surge of blood, eyes closed, both caught and snared in the web of daily circumstance, helpless, powerless, like children in the face of a smashing fate. And come out, ugliness and blackness, and rear your hydra-heads and fall like a fever unto the whiteness and goodness and purity of man's aspirations; reveal him naked in his ancient bestiality, reveal him small and black and naked in the hollow propulsion of his old and new passions . . . all, all for a nickel, a *gorr* nickel.

. . . and they were married one day, like the owl and the pussy-cat, and bought their furniture on the installment-plan on Third Avenue: maple for the bedroom, and a Louis XIV three-piece set for the living room, and a cabinet-radio, and a toaster and an electric iron, and their fine planning at night, when spent and sated, they whispered, this boy and his young wife . . . a car later, and she'd give up her job for that operation on her feet — didn't you hear about it, she'd gotten tumors under the soles . . .

After she resigned, she had that operation and was laid up for three weeks, lying in bed and reading novels he got for her at the corner drugstore, and Barry got himself a raise of two dollars by listening to the boss lecture on how to get ahead in the world, and being there promptly before eight every day and not leaving until five after seven at night.

and after she told him, they were both scared at the stark immensity of it, and they couldn't fall asleep arguing seriously whether it would be a girl or a boy. Barry wouldn't let her do any work at all, and she laughed and kissed him tenderly, Darling, it's only the first month'...

... Barry trembling before a little, baldheaded man. Listen, you don't understand! It's not for me, there's a kid coming, and we got to give it a chance! You don't understand, you're killing me! I'll go on for half twenty, but you've got to keep me! The little, bald-headed man saying, What can I do? Kick out Bill who's got three kids and been with me eleven years? There's no work when the lousy tenants don't wanna pay the rent, and I got my taxes just the same! I'm giving you two weeks more in your envelope, and you're young and strong — you can get *something*...

This boy and girl, at 86th they're whispering to themselves and you can't hear a word. Maybe they're used to whispering, and besides, the noise is terrific what with a lot of them pleading *Lemme off, please!* and the gray-suited guards bawling *Take it easy, No more room in 'is one, another train right behin'*. And a poor girl whose station this is is trapped and can't get off, and is working her thin arms in futile gestures against a massive wall of sympathetic, unyielding flesh. And if you get a chance, look at this young man, husband he is, and notice that odd twist to his lips, a permanent, complaining snarl every time he opens his mouth to speak; and the blue eyes of his young wife, like the blue of the morning sky you'll see again soon. And their shabby clothes — but they're young, you say, and maybe next year, next year... who can tell, who knows? But it's crush again, and jam and squeeze and *oh, stop, you're hurting me!* and rush and twist and speed again, and for God's sake, will they hurry! You get docked for every minute you're late, you know.

here's the last of the toiling-man now, for the brunt of him has filled the dawn trains, where there was room and night-smell, and maybe a party in tiaras and tuxes back from an all-night wedding up in Washington Heights, and the sleeping stench of the homeless ones, snivel and slime and a cry of fear in the cloudy grave of darkness... and the omnipresent hunger, the hundred-pointed hunger of the forlorn, the unheeded, the lost, the trodden, the uncomplaining... and this last fringe of the mighty laboring-man can bear the rolling seethe of crowd with indurate quiet. What's it to the core

and body and nearness of forge and furnace, of yard and shop and wharf? What's it to the bellow of the hammering machine and the blasting roar of the foundry?

You can feel that slender girl in front of you give way, feel her melt like tallow into your curves and angularities, your own mould and sharpness, and the press of the fat blonde behind you trying to push you away as if it were your fault — but brother, try holding a steamroller with one finger, or five, try stemming that black, glutinous, swaying mass with one pair of shoulders. . . . And catch a glimpse of white post and a succession of underground lights, like posted sentinels to show the way, and move with the rising roar and twist and motion.

. . . the last of the money went to a doctor on 12th Street who performed some magic inside of Marion and said, It's all right now, you won't have that baby. And it *was* easier after that, with less worrying for one thing.

At first they borrowed to meet the installments due, but then their debts began to pile up and so back went the four posted maple bed, and the radio, and the studio couch and the bridge table and even the dishes, and lucky for Marion her father had put on a soldier suit and got himself killed in the Argonne, for with the monthly government check her mother got they all managed to live together — she and her mother and Barry, in the two-room flat; and she and her husband slept on the same day-bed where first they'd learned to love each other . . .

But there's luck at Grand Central, and with all those people getting off, surely you should get a seat . . . and then to laugh at those waiting behind the iron railings on the platform . . . and the train draws to a grinding, squeaking stop. The restlessness of being free once more, the shaking and the squirming of the squeamish ones, the shuffle of leather on the ribbed flooring, the audible sighing, and fixing of tie and collar and hat, the drawing apart of a seventeen-year-old boy and a lanky black girl who'd been so intimate for ten minutes, and the sudden draft of cold air when the doors open . . .

And you get a seat and so does that girl with the tired face, but her husband has to stand, dangling over her on a white loop . . . and the train moves into motion again and begins to twist and roar and rock from wheel to wheel — and sink down on your straw pallet

with gratitude, brother, and open your paper for the first time and learn about that new bill in Congress, and the lobbying, and the filibustering, and the ranting speaking, and the gallery packed to the rafters for the fun that little senator will be sure to provide for them, and the newspapers waiting for it too, this fun, and the president's statement to the press and his jovial mood; and the ramifications, the complications, the technicalities and the top-heavy burden of law and constitution. And that young girl, the one with the wedding band on her finger, is reading a newspaper too.

... and the boy and girl will be two of many making the familiar round of the agencies downtown, two no different from the rest, two with the other sitters in the tiny Trinity churchyard, waiting, all waiting ... looking with unseeing eye on the panorama of house and tree and street and car that pulsates all around them with a greedy screaming and tearing. They will look at the pigeons waddling away from the hurrying feet of those who have such important things to do this fine Monday morning. They will wait, this boy and girl, and being young it will be their definite prerogative to hope and dream, and wait some more ...

But the train will go on, with its unrest and its motion ... it will roar on through the vastness of space and the cadence of time ...

SECOND WIFE^{*}

By HARRY HARRISON KROLL

(From *The Atlantic Monthly*)

I

I RECOLLECT how crazy I was about Sissy Whitley.

She was a thick, deep girl, and turning eighteen, though as old in body and head as she'd ever be, I allow; I always thought of her as a big Jimson weed, or maybe a pokeberry bush, growing in deep loam behind some old barn, in burning June sunshine.

Her hair was matted, and yellow-like; it had streaks of sunburn in it, making an uneven tone of brass on her head. I know that don't sound much; but when you think of her warm red cheeks, and her fine strong teeth, white as anything where the black-gum brush reached them; and how she laughed, and how healthy she was, and all — well, she just got me, that's all.

I was seventeen, myself, then; but mighty big for my age. I was a grown man, in fact; at least lots of people took me for voting age. Twenty, not less.

All I can say is, Sissy got me. That laugh of hers — insulting, happy, loud, goading; and her deep thick body . . . I remember the first time I had the feeling of all of her in my arms — as Dennis Sawyer would have said it, the log-load of her. It was a Sunday night, on our way back from preaching. Sissy had climbed up on a rail fence, and she slipped off and I caught her before she hit the ground. I thought, then, it was accident, but — anyhow, the brass of her hair in the moonlight; her body — and you know how spongy and queer and nice girl-flesh feels, when you're a boy; her breath, with just the faintest odor of snuff on it; and that laugh, husky and tempting — you can see for yourself, and me only seventeen, though big for my age and all that, and Sissy a year older, and as grown up and everything as she would ever be.

She must of wanted me to kiss her, but I didn't know that then. I set her on the ground. She was giggling, and I tell you I felt queer. A little blind, maybe.

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'You just ain't fitten for nothing *a-tall*, Bud!' she snickered.

It made me a little mad. I reckon it was because I wanted her to get on the fence and fall again.

'How come I ain't fitten for nothing?' I asked her. 'Old Dennis Sawyer will tell you himself I'm about the best sawmill buck in these Forked Deer bottoms! And *he* ain't a man to brag on his wage hands.'

Sissy looked at me and choked back her giggles until she liked to bust. Finally she asked me, as if inquiring after the health of Dennis's old woman: 'How is Mag Sawyer coming along?'

'Poorly. Mighty poorly.'

'Bud, reckon Mag will die?' Now Sissy's laugh was really gone 'She can't last much longer, in reason.'

'A year, reckon, Bud?'

It seemed strange to me, all at once, that Sissy was so het up about an old woman. 'Not apt,' I told her. 'But how come you so interested, huh?'

She just stood there in the moonlight a minute, looking odd; she started to giggle, then didn't, and put her arm through mine, and hummed and kind of shoved me along, till we come to her gate. I still didn't think nothing, but back in my head I must of been thinking something, too. But when Sissy dallied, smiling through the palings at me, and swaying herself and humming that silly song — well, the back-head thinking stopped. She wanted me to try to kiss her. But I was scared. What could a boy of seventeen that didn't know nothing about girls do, in a fix like this?

She said, 'You still ain't fitten for nothing, Bud! Good night.'

'Good night, Sissy,' I told her; and I waited, and she waited.

I turned away a little, and so Sissy went in the house. It was a boxed, weather-brown shack of a house, on a rise of ground above the swamps of Forked Deer. It was a littered dump; kind of trashy, when you thought of it. But I wasn't thinking. I went home, not able to think much.

'Well, Bud,' Dennis Sawyer asked me next morning at the breakfast table, 'where was you out last night so late?'

'Preaching,' I said. 'And seeing Sissy Whitley there and back.'

I still wasn't thinking, you see. For I knowed that Sissy had worked here at Sawyers' a little, but that was before I come here. Well, Dennis looked at me, and red went over his flabby old face.

Mag, his bean-pole hag of an old woman, she took to coughing. She got up and went out. It all got strange in there. It liked to took my appetite. But I finished my biscuit and butter and molasses and got out and went down to the shelter where the oxen were kept. It was inside a pole-fenced lot.

There was a lot of log wagons and log carts here, for Dennis Sawyer was running a sawmill. It wasn't a big sawmill, nor a little one, neither; I reckon he could cut, in a twelve-hour day, eighteen or twenty thousand board feet — that size mill. He farmed some, too. In the open lands back from the swamp he had a right smart patch of fresh land open, and in corn and peas for the bulls, and a little cotton, for cash crop, and to give him the flavor of being a big planter. He had maybe fifteen hands in the woods and at the mill, and some nigger tenants working the land. I boarded at the house, the only wage hand fed and bedded; that was because, I reckon, I could cook at a pinch.

Well, I hitched up the bulls and cracked the whip and drove off to the woods, wanting to get off from the house, and to think of Sissy, too.

Well, Dennis was grumpy when I drove back with the load. He looked at me pretty sour and mad. Mag was in bed. I seen her laying there, by the open window. At noon me and Dennis et our cold corn bread and Yankee beans and boiled pork on the log ramps above the mill. Dennis kept eyeing me. He said finally: —

'Well, Bud, how was the sermon last night? I bet you didn't hear a word of it.'

I said, not thinking, 'It was the same old hellfire-brimstone stuff. But you can't skeer me with that mush.'

For some crazy reason that made old Dennis mad. He wagged his finger under my nose. 'Darn your pop-eyed infidel picture, ye'd better be skeered of hellfire! Bud, when ye get to roasting I reckon you'll respect God and the Devil, too! By durn —' He was panting, and red in the face as a beet.

Heck, I didn't want old Dennis Sawyer to get on my neck and fire me! I had to hang on to this job and stay close to Sissy. Well, did I back some water! 'Ah, I didn't mean it that way, Uncle Dennis.' That was the name I called him by. It saved mistering him. 'Not the way you taken it.' Then I got mealy-mouthed. 'Anyway, me and Sissy didn't talk foolish stuff on the way home.

Why, she talked mostly about you-all. How she liked to work here, for Mis' Mag — how good you was to her, and all that —'

Dennis stopped a hunk of pork-meat midway of his red unshaved jowl. He was as still and quiet as a froze rabbit, or something — like a clock when you wake and hear it stop in the night. He just looked at me, odd-like. And I had to go on, messing myself deeper, still not thinking, except I knowed I had got his mind off *me*. 'Yessir, we talked about you, Uncle Dennis!'

'What — what did she say?'

Then I wished I hadn't got in so deep. But I floundered on, making it up as I went.

'Ah, about all this, here —' I waved at the logs, the sawmill and house, and bulls. 'Cows, land, big sawmill, big bank account — you know, all that —'

'She talked about — about that, did she?'

'That's right.' I looked at him close. His eyes was yellow and narrow, like a big tomcat's. It give me the creeps, I ain't denying. He all of a sudden finished his grub. Then he knocked the crumbs off his overalls legs. He motioned for the jug of water, and I reached down and handed it to him.

He drew the cob stopper and threwed his head back and drunk, the sunlight in his red, deep-cut, warty face. Then he handed the jug back to me to drink. I rubbed off the jug mouth on my sleeve when he wasn't looking, and drunk, while he lighted his pipe.

Dennis then slid about so that his body fit the log, and he leaned back against a sapling. It was June, I recollect, and burning hot. I got drowsy after I'd packed my belly. But I was wide-awake, too, watching old Dennis, and him tomcattish yet. It begun to crawl into me — I mean, funny ideas, that made me mad, and hurt me, and kind of tickled me too, they was so crazy.

Dennis talked in the voice of a man who had done a lot of thinking about something. 'I've often thought about men, and second wives, Bud — young wives, I mean.'

I said, 'Well, I still got my first one to get.'

He puffed and spat, not hearing; and I recollect how I just sat and looked at him close. I'd always thought of Dennis Sawyer as a big man, but he wasn't; he was fat around the belly, and his chest was right smart thick, but his legs was skinny, and his neck thin and weak-like. It was his shaggy head that made him seem big — and

the way he hunkered himself. When you looked at him, not thinking, you'd have said he was old. But he wasn't; that is, he was about forty-five, and had the way of somebody not quite forty. Bright eyes, thick healthy hair, and all that. There was just a lot of man in him — too much when you got to thinking how mean he was. To hear him carry on about sin, and talk in pious-preacher talk about hell and eternity and the like, you'd figure he was a good man; but when you seen him, as I did once, kick a steer that was bogged down in the blue-black mud of West Tennessee till he broke its bones and it died — well, you'd get a different notion. I used to be scared of him. That was past. I only got sick at the stomach, looking at him, now, thinking of his hangdog way and poor mouth about hard times and lack of money, and him with a bank account at Dyersburg, and Mag dying because he was too stingy to put her in the hospital.

Well, he droned on, talking stuff he'd thought of, I reckon, in many a midnight.

'But, then,' he sort of argued the matter with himself, 'they is second wives, *and* second wives. Young women *and* young women.'

'I allow so,' I grugged him.

He went on directly: 'Take old Oliver Mingle, now. He lost his first wife. Right prime woman she was, too. So she kicked out, and old Mingle got to poking his nose about and exercising his eyeballs in s'arch of a fraish female. He was, I recollect, sixty-five. He had a right smart passel of money laid up, too. Them's the kind the young critters look for, and take in. You know how it shapes up — first wife works her fingers to the bone, saving and scraping; she does without so's to accumulate for her old age and his; so she works herself to death. Then the second wife, more apt than not a lazy hunker, comes along and lives on the fat of the land. So this-here wench Jo Landis, from down Reelfoot way, she takes in old Ol Mingle, and the way she leads him around by the nose and unlatches the pucker-strings of his purse is a sin and a shame. Know what, Bud? She had no more principle than a skunk. All the while she was making out like she went back home to Reelfoot to see her mammy and pappy, why, she was going back to a sweetheart she left there. Did Oliver raise hell when he got wind of it!'

'Then what?' I asked, grumpy.

'The gal lied out of it, drawed the wool over his eyes, till she fin-

ished getting his money; then she snapped her fingers in his whiskers and walked out and taken her young man. Can you think of a human being that lousy?’

‘I’d better gear the bulls,’ I said, ‘and haul some logs — some of Mis’ Mag’s logs.’

I seen him squinch at that. It was virgin timber. He was cutting it and shipping the lumber, and putting the money in the bank, while Mag died by inches.

II

I went to see Sissy soon after this, a night when the moon was plumb full. Sissy wanted to walk, so I said all right, and we started off. I liked to of fell over a pile of junk on the crazy porch. Sissy’s old trashy paw could pile up as much as a boxcar load of plunder on a porch — ploughs, harness, plough points, grass sacks, shoes, stove-wood, dogs, dirty clothes, the devil only knows what. And the smells that Sissy’s maw kept the place varnished with, where she was too trifling to scrub and scour — well, it didn’t make you hanker to eat there regular. But they was clever folks, at that; they laughed a lot, and made you forget how trashy they was. They drank, and cussed, and fought; but they got on, maybe a lap or two ahead of starvation. But Sissy was different. You’ve noticed how pretty and purple the bloom of the Jimson weed is? She was like that. You mash the flower and it lets out a stink, of course; but I wasn’t thinking of that now. Besides, you kind of like to be around trashy folks, for it makes you feel you’re somebody yourself. Now, I never felt like much around folks like Tom Hornbeak, and his sister Mary, what lived out at Roellen, where I’d come from down here to work for Dennis Sawyer. Mary was studying for a school-teacher, and was she keen! Tom was finishing high school, and went well-dressed, and he could talk proper like nobody’s business. They liked me, too. But I always had to be on my *p*’s and *q*’s around them.

Funny enough, tonight Sissy was thinking about Mary Hornbeak, too. You see, I’d told her about Mary, and about Tom, and how they wasn’t high and mighty around me, though they had a right to be, if they wanted to. Mary’d tried to learn me a little proper talk and manners, and Tom thought him and me might go

into some kind of a business. That is, if I'd come back and maybe go to school some. They liked me — I could see that; and I just thought worlds of them. So I'd told Sissy about it, you see; and how me and Mary sometimes wrote letters, though I hadn't answered Mary's last letter.

'Because,' I had started to say to Sissy; then my tongue got thick and I couldn't finish that it was because I was in love with Sissy — crazy about her, to tell the truth.

So, as Sissy and me walked along in the moonlight, she bumped close to me, and laughed that funny intimate laugh of hers. It got me, I'm telling you.

'Have you writ that letter to Mary Hornbeak yet, Bud?'

'Aw, how could I be writing letters to anybody when I'm thinking of you all the time, Sissy — night and day?'

She stopped in the path. 'Do you mean that, Bud?'

'I sure do mean that!'

So we stood there, looking at one another. Sissy peered back, to make sure the old man wasn't following us. You see, the old folks must of been thinking about old Dennis Sawyer, and those things older folks think of but young folks don't. Then Sissy laughed, and looked back at me; then she took my two hands and put them on her and showed me how to hold her tight, right up close. All the while she kept giggling.

'You are just the no-fittenest boy ever I seen, Bud Bane! Darn your trifling picture, I never seen the beat of you.'

I told her something — I reckon it must of been what could you expect in a boy that was only seventeen, and backward, though he looked like a man. So she said: 'I aims to show you how to kiss a girl.'

And she showed me. I don't mind saying, now, that it was a funny experience, that first time I ever kissed a girl, and crazy about Sissy like I was. The second kiss had a different taste — that is, some different; but it was a right smart while before I actually got the full flavor. Of all the things I ever seen Sissy work at, kissing was just about the best job she could do. When you thought of it, she was like a song that comes from away down deep and goes away on the dewy wind. Or maybe she was like a stream of water gushing out of the side of a hill. A Jimson weed, blooming in the hot day in delta land. You know what I mean. I don't know book learning

enough to make it sound right. But she was terrible and awful pretty to me, in that little time there in the moonlight on the path. She finally laughed.

'Bud, do you like it?'

My voice was choked and funny and flat when I told her, 'God, yes.'

'You love me, don't you?'

'God, yes. A long time.'

'You never told me.'

'I didn't know how.'

'You are just the no-countest boy ever I seen, Bud!'

'Anyway, old Dennis Sawyer has been talking about you.'

'Me?' She laughed, a lazy crazy-girl laugh, and I thought she'd be mad; but she was a little pleased and interested. 'What's that old mudwump been saying about me, Bud?'

'He's been talking about second wives.'

She echoed in a voice like something across a slough, 'Second wives!'

'He's got eyes on you, that's what! And his old woman not dead yet. It makes me sick!'

'So Dennis got his eye peeled on a young gal for a second wife, huh?'

'God, I hope you ain't thinking of being her!' I was hot, shocked, and my feelings got in my voice. 'Durn his low-down picture, he might at least be decent enough to wait till Mag's dead and cold in her grave!'

Did Sissy get mad? No. She just laughed. It was a lazy, funny sound. She held up her rich mouth, filled with them good teeth of hers, and it just got me. I took to practising on kissing her some more, and I may as well admit I got good fast. You got to remember that I was only seventeen, and she was older, and as growed-up as ever she'd be. A girl like Sissy could do what she wanted with a boy like me, as well as a old man like Dennis Sawyer. So she puffed a little breath in my face when I stopped kissing her.

'Listen, Bud,' she said, soft.

'Well, what, Sissy?'

'Listen, and if this punches you some place, don't you beller too loud.'

'I reckon I can stand it,' I told her, getting warm some more.

'All right, then. Mag's going to kick the bucket. All right, what if I did marry old Dennis, then? Wait — whoa! — you said you could stand it, and now you stop hollering till I'm through.' She held me, though I tried pretty hard to let her loose. She went right on: 'What if I married him? I could loose up the pucker-strings of his old sock-bank, I'm telling you, Bud. He's a low, stingy old devil. He's got it coming to him. Bud, quit trying to pull loose, now! It wouldn't mean you and me breaking up. I'd make Dennis make you head man about the works. You'd be boss, and everything. Don't you see? I could fix you up a nice room there — better'n any you got now; and cook good for you; and you'd be mister. Boss the niggers and hands at the mill. Be the whole works. And I'd have silk underwear, and silk stockings, and silk dresses, and fine shoes, and everything. Wouldn't you like to see me in silk underwear, Bud?'

I tell you, I was shocked. Me only a boy — there wasn't enough man in me yet, and the boy didn't know what to do about this woman he had to contend with. I was shocked, sick, dizzy. In that funny caressing voice, with kisses now and then, Sissy went on to outline it all. How she'd be better off, and so would I; and then later we could marry, when she had milked the old cow dry. Besides, how many years would it take us, being married, to accumulate a half, or a third, as much? She had reason in her, Sissy did. And I did want money. I liked to boss niggers and sawmill labor. I loved Sissy so awful and terrible that, scandalized as I was, I just couldn't think about going away and leaving her, though she tied herself to old Dennis Sawyer. I tell you, I was a changed man, in that little while I stood there with her in my arms, and thinking of old Mag dying, and her marrying old Dennis, and me hanging around the farm and sawmill, waiting. Old Dennis had it coming to him, all right. But it hurt me, away deep.

Sissy shook me, and shook me. 'All right, Bud — say something.' 'I can't.'

'Well, think about it, then. He's got all of fifteen thousand dollars. Two years would about fix it, now wouldn't it? If a second wife is such and such, can a second husband be such a much?'

So we walked again, and talked — Sissy done most of the talking, and it was all sense. I reckon I got mad, after I'd begged her not to do it. We turned back, going to the shack. Well, it was deep late when I left her and went back home.

III

A light was burning in the front room at Sawyer's when I snuck through the gate and tried to get in without Dennis knowing. But he heard me. He was listening, waiting, I was to know. I got my door open, and was slipping in, when there he stood with a little brass lamp in his hand. He hadn't pulled off his clothes or laid down. He looked funny, and his voice was empty.

'Bud, she is dead. Mag's gone.'

That was all he said. For a little my flesh crawled. You never saw a man, as I did, whose woman had gone, when he was waiting for her to go to marry a young girl, and seen her gone for good. And I knowed why Mag had kicked out so much sooner than she might have. It was the thought of Sissy. I allow as Mag and Dennis must of had a fight after I left the house — about the girl. Maybe Mag openly accused Dennis. Women are like that. And I never knowed, for Dennis was there alone, and he wouldn't talk — never.

Now she was dead.

Well, they put the poor old soul away with a prayer and song or two, there not far from Forked Deer. And right off the women began to talk and snicker. You know how folks talk about such things. Would Dennis Sawyer start out to get him a fresh wife? Would he stop at old Whitley's shack? Dennis done both of them very things.

It got me in a terrible mess. I'd see Sissy now and then, and I'd give her hell. She'd keep me pacified with her passion and her soft words and kisses. When I was with her, it was like being under a spell. She'd kiss me till I was drunk. I'd never loved ary other girl, and she wound me around her little finger. She'd plead with me not to get on a high horse.

'Don't go off on a high hoss, Bud!' she would plead, in that honey voice of hers. 'It's for us both, all for you. You just lay low and keep calm. Don't start any hell-raising. I'm going to marry old Dennis anyway; so you just stick around and have yourself a good job.'

She shook me affectionately, but I tell you I was sick in my soul.

'You'll have a lot of brats by him!' I said bitterly.

'Who, me? God, no!'

'But —' I just looked at her, pop-eyed, I reckon.

'No, not me. Not Sissy!' So I had the feeling, more than ever, that Sissy was ages older than me, though only a year in time; and she talked of things I'd never quite know about. For my part, I couldn't tear myself from her, hating and loving her like I did. If I'd been older, if I'd knowed more about girls — but you see how it is. When a boy is in my sort of fix, he stays; so I stayed. Me and Sissy sometimes would fight, and I'd say I was going to kill her. But she'd only say, in those honey tones, 'Bud, would you kill me? You couldn't watch me die. You know you couldn't.' She had me; for I couldn't. There were nights I couldn't sleep. I'd go out in the woods and try to walk it off. I planned sometimes to murder old Dennis Sawyer. But he owed me three months' back pay; it would be late summer before he could sell off his lumber and pay me up. You can't kill a man when things are messed up like that. And old Dennis was simply crazy about Sissy. At first he said that for the looks of things he would wait a year. But it wasn't long before he wondered if he could hold out six months. Finally he said to hell with the gossips.

'To hell with 'em, Bud!' He overlooked my sullen ways, my open hate for him, and even told me all that went on in his head. 'If I waited a year, they'd blob; if six months, they'd blab; if no time a-tall, they'll only blab-blob, so what the hell?' Then he might reach over and slap my back and grin. He was an evil devil when he grinned like that. 'Don't take it so hard, Bud. Don't look so down in the mouth. I couldn't help beating your time, now could I?'

I didn't say nothing, only glowered.

'You see, Bud, gals will take up with growed-up men, men of some means, some experience and all, lots quicker than with a sappy boy. But you'll have your inning — just wait. Wait for *your* second wife.'

'Anyhow, I won't pick her out before the first one's cold in her grave.'

But it didn't faze him. And I decided not to say the next thing that popped in my head: —

'And second wives come high — when they're young. But fools like you pay the price, thinking all the time maybe you won't have to.'

That, as much as anything, kind of reconciled me to sticking

around. Then, maybe I hoped at the last minute Sissy would get cold feet. But I didn't know Sissy.

I heard them that night, when they had a big fight in the path. It was dark-moon, and I was on my way to see Sissy, and run into 'em there in the woods. Sissy and old Dennis was at it, tooth and nail. I hung to the fence, listening.

'Well, we're going to have a church wedding, or else!' Sissy said.

Dennis Sawyer clamped his foot down on that. 'No, sir! Not by a dang sight. Walk up that church aisle with you, and all them damned women grinning up at me? God, no!'

'If that's the way you feel about it, then, no wedding for me and you!'

That got Dennis stirred up bad. He began to beg, then to plead, and for all the world it was like a dog when you take it out to shoot it, and it knows. I wanted to laugh and was sick at the stomach at the same time.

'You can't go back on me now, Sissy — after we've —'

'All right, a big church wedding, or nothing!'

If it'd been Mag, Dennis would have pawed up the earth, put his foot down, and that'd been the end of it. But this was Sissy, and she was young, and her flesh was like sponge. Well, she won, as I knowed she would. So, as the days went along, there was a scrap of some kind every time they met. Next it was about these-here invitations with the letters sticking up above the surface of the paper. Sissy wanted to send them to all her kin back up at Obion, over on Reelfoot; send 'em to all Mag's kin, Dennis's kin, and the old women he hated to march up the church aisle before. The church she picked out was Middle Fork Baptist Church, and it was about the biggest and high-and-mightiest here on Forked Deer. I reckon Sissy picked it because she wanted to show 'em. In a way I didn't blame her, sick as I was over the whole mess. Anyhow, Sissy told me about it when I met her one night off from the shack; for now that Dennis Sawyer was courting their gal, old Whitley and his squaw told me to get and stay got, or I'd wish I had.

I tried to beg Sissy out of it. 'Let's you and I marry, Sissy. I am strong, and willing, and can always get work. We can marry —'

'And live on what?'

'On bread and water. I'd do it for you.'

'No bread and water for me, Bud.' Her lip was turned. 'Not

even to be your wife. I've had plenty of bread and water in my time with old Whitley and his wife, thank you; and I got my fill. But, honey, don't you get discouraged and go away. You just stick around and be head man. Don't you understand, darling?'

I don't know that I did. I was bitter. I told her, 'Well, Dennis has been talking to me, too. You think you're going to pluck his feathers. You won't. He's not going to turn loose of his cash for you!'

She laughed lazily, a nasty trifling laugh, the like of which I hope no woman ever laughs about me, for I wouldn't marry a second wife made of gold that laughed about me that way.

'You don't know Sissy!' she said.

So there it was. I could never touch her with an argument or pleading. She loved me — Sissy did; but she loved silk things, too. The invitations went out and the decorations were bought and hung in the church, and old Dennis had paid for Sissy's wedding duds, and diked himself out in new clothes, the like of which would have paid for a span of prime mules. Dennis had a sick and happy look. There was a watery-mouthed youngness about him. He'd worked off his belly some, and got a haircut, and looked, funny-like, sort of like regular folks. But deep down he had his sick moments. I could see that, watching him when he didn't know I was looking. All told, he'd put out enough cash to buy a good second-hand portable saw-mill already, and still had to walk up the aisle between rows of watching old women. Then how long did he have any guarantee of keeping Sissy after he got her? I saw him watching me, now; the question was in that mean look in his face. But I'd stay around. Sissy would see to it that I was made head man. I might catch a load of buckshot in my belly; but there I was — I couldn't go away. Maybe something would happen. I'd stick around. So it came the Sunday morning for the wedding, and at last I realized what men about to be hung come to see.

IV

I tell you, the last place in the world I wanted to go was to that church. I couldn't go. But I would go, I knew; and so, after I dressed and ate a bite of grub, I got ready. But just before going out I stood a long time in the middle of this room where I had stayed

while working for Dennis. It was a drab old room, and unkept and a little smelly. Houses where men stay are like that. Well, this room I would keep staying in when Sissy ran the house; but it would be changed. The bed would be made; maybe there'd be a carpet on the floor; curtains would flutter at the window. Sissy would cook and wash for me and look after me. I knew that. She'd crack the whip and poor old Dennis Sawyer would jump. He didn't think he would, but he didn't know. As for me, I'd stay on, and make the best of it, seeing Sissy come and go the bride of this old heathen. Two years, three, at most. In the meanwhile I'd live off the fat of the land; then Sissy would have milked the cow, and we'd go away with the bucket of cream. Dennis Sawyer had it coming to him. Men like him make their beds, even to their second-marriage beds; they're selfish, and so they have coming to them just what they get. Dennis thought he and Sissy would fill that marriage bed and not kick the slats out; but he didn't know Sissy.

There was a letter on my table that Dennis must have brought from the post office late last night and put there. But I was so sick that I didn't even notice who it was from. I only knew that I was sick. I had grown up. I was, I reckon, as mature as I'd ever get, though but seventeen, going on eighteen. For I'd seen down to the soul of a female, and what a little ugly wart of a thing it was! A girl can make a man feel more sick than anything else under God's heaven. Or she can lift him higher. I got my hat and went toward the church.

Well, the place was crowded. All the old women, that Dennis had feared, were there, setting like buzzards waiting for fresh meat. Some kin of Sissy's, seeing me, got up and give me the seat on the left-hand side, on the aisle; and so I knowed she had looked after a place for me. It give me a creepy feeling. The church was awful pretty. Flowers like you buy — and how they must of set old Dennis back! Then the organ started, with that wedding march, and everything got still as a tomb. So here Sissy come, walking by her paw, who wore a new suit that come out of Dennis Sawyer's pocket. Dennis come from another direction, his brother walking with him, like they do in town at weddings. I never seen one, but so they say. You thought of money. But I was looking at Sissy. I tell you, in her white satin dress, her veil of that funny stuff like dew on cobwebs at dawn — it got me. She seemed like an angel, for all

she was a devil away down deep. The only color was her cheeks, scarlet lips, and that brassy hair, like dull fire, through the silk lace. Her and Dennis met before the preacher; and I liked to bit off my tongue to keep from yelling when they come to that part where if anybody's got anything to say why these two shouldn't be joined in the holy estate of matrimony — *holy*, good God!

So they were married.

Now they were coming back down the aisle, straight toward where I set. Sissy's face was curious — it was a little hard, twisted, but when her eyes met mine it went tender and color come fast into her cheeks. I knew she was going to do it, had planned to do it, when she passed — seemed to turn her ankle, and stopped a second leaning close against me. The perfume filled my nose. I reckon in that little time I was blind. It was Sissy's way of saying it was all right: Bud, don't you beller so loud, or take this too hard; and two or three years isn't so long. The filmy veil got hung between me and the end of the bench; and so Sissy leaned against me a longer time till I got it uncaught. Then she went on, me setting there with the color of her hair and eyes and white teeth as a sort of memory in my own eyes. I reckon I was plenty sick. The music stopped then and I got up. I don't remember how I got out of that place. I must of shoved and jammed my way through the old women, who blab-blobbered like crows going to roost on the arms of a skeercrow. When I got out I must have run, for I was sweating and out of breath when I got to the house ahead of the bride and groom. Maybe I had in the back of my mind that letter. There it lay. It was from Mary. I ripped it open. She and Tom spoke of me so often — how I was such a strong, happy boy, so bright, and clean, and good. Why hadn't I written? By this time surely I had saved enough money to come on back home and enter school. Tom was wanting help now in his work.

I'd have to look to my *p*'s and *q*'s. There'd be bad moments. I slung my duds into an old grip, took the cash for my work Dennis Sawyer had paid me a day or so ago, and jumped out of the window as Sissy and Dennis come in at the front gate. So I run, thinking how it would change it all for Sissy when I was no longer there... her young, spoiled now by being a second wife, and married to a mean old skinflint like Dennis... would it be, I wondered, hell?

I ran, toting my suitcase as I did. And as I went I knew by a

twist of instinct, just like a flash, what lots and lots of men have to grow old and take a second wife to learn about.

What was it? Never mind. But you'll know, yourself, that day when you aren't any longer young, and marry a girl for a second one, thinking it's youth that you want.

THE INTRIGUE OF MR. S. YAMAMOTO^{*}

By R. H. LINN

(From *Story*)

MR. S. YAMAMOTO, Japanese gentleman of stamp, sat on thick green plush with wide rump and watch pretty little tracery on window by imagery of trees and flowers outside trotting at gallop. Mr. S. Yamamoto very wide also in stomach, and also foreward, all embraced by watch chain about middle.

Black cigar with burning end have itself in Mr. Yamamoto mouth. His face open and smile like flower in morning when sun gets up and smoke comes out very fast like engine of train. Puff, puff, puff. When car jiggle up and down Mr. Yamamoto stomach jiggle up and down also in very happy manner. (This not important.)

In next moment or two down aisle has to come porter who is dark skin and speak bad English perhaps just come over from Africa. Porter say, Pardon suh, sign say no smoking not allowed.

Ah-yes-yes-yes-yes, say Mr. S. Yamamoto in best Japanese manner and he lean out in aisle to look at sign, hissing in polite Oriental way.

Sign say, Not Smoking in these parts.

Mr. Yamamoto take cigar and put out against sole of foot in shoe. Mr. S. Yamamoto believe when in Roman to do as Mussolini. He thank porter in very nice fashion for information as to custom to be observed in Pullman.

Thank you, Porter. And he gave porter extra cigar; new, un-smoked.

Porter say thank you too, and feel best of friends.

Mr. Yamamoto very kind man in circumspect manner. Sometime soon a sadness creep over Mr. S. Yamamoto as he look at family across aisle of car. Little boy does not mind his father. Father say keep quiet; little boy scream. Father say speak to lady and thank her for candy and little boy make faces to lady. Thus

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Mr. Yamamoto have sadness feeling. Mayhaps this is custom on Pullman cars. Americans very fun people. Americans very jump-hurry-fast people but when having time, very nice, he say. Very certain Americans got funny faces and all look very much same person to be sure, making difficult for Japanese man to tell apart. All very simple. American got efficiency from tip of head to top of toes. Japanese business man pretend to be like American; American pretend to be like Englishman; Englishman pretend to be like God. This what Mr. S. Yamamoto say to himself thinking.

Little boy across aisle say, Who is queer man with funny eyes, mama?

Mr. Yamamoto pretend not to hear.

Little boy mama whisper in ear. Little boy say very loud. What is Chinaman, mama?

Mr. Yamamoto go on to read magazine and feel very sorry for papa of such a little boy.

American man much like Japanese man. Some have kind twinkle in eye and some have not. Example of kind man is to come.

Soon it happen Mr. Yamamoto wish to powder his nose as Americans say and he get up and go to end of car. When he return he see through window that train pass strange white field which stretch to distance like plain in Northern part of Japan. Mr. Yamamoto stop and bow to old man in compartment next to his own.

Old man have glasses on nose with gold edge. He bow politely back to Mr. Yamamoto.

Pardon slight interruption, Mr. Yamamoto say, but you could give me a little information please?

Certainly, man say. Won't you sit down with us please? This is my daughter.

Old man point to beautiful girl in seat opposite and Mr. Yamamoto bow and introduce self. Name of old man Mr. Jackson and name of beautiful girl Celia. Mr. Yamamoto remember this carefully because of what happen later.

Where is snow come from in such hot weather? Mr. Yamamoto ask and point to strange white field out of window.

Now old man and beautiful girl know that Mr. Yamamoto make funny mistake but they do not laugh.

Mr. Jackson say, That you see is salt and we are soon to come to Great Salt Lake.

Oh thank you very much, Mr. Yamamoto say. He see that they are very polite and do not laugh.

I see that you are very polite and do not laugh at mistake, he say. I see that you are both gentlemen.

Mr. Jackson and his daughter smile with modesty at Mr. Yamamoto kind words. They talk for while about strange appearance of salt and tell Mr. Yamamoto they have to go to Chicago because beautiful girl a little sick and should see specialist doctor.

Mr. Yamamoto very sorry for beautiful girl. He tell them all about his little boy Takashi and his little girl Asako that he have left back in Japan. He take out shot-snaps.

This Takashi and this Asako in Japanese park at Tokyo, he say.

Aren't they sweet, beautiful girl say. Old man like them too, and Mr. Yamamoto very proud father.

When porter say dinner ready, Mr. Yamamoto say good-bye and go to wash hands and face. He wish for nice hot Japanese bath to be all clean and comfortable but rolling train does not provide such.

After dinner, Mr. Yamamoto go to observation car to write cards to Takashi and Asako. To Takashi he send picture of large bear in zoo, and to Asako he send picture of American movie actress because Asako wish to be movie actress when she grow up.

When he finish to write cards he go to seat and find porter making bed where seats were. He watch very carefully to tell children about strange process.

Finally berth made up and Mr. Yamamoto decide to go in bed and read Japanese magazine till sleep. First he undress with great difficulty for no room in such small space for both man and stomach; then he look out black window and see little firefly-lights go by like sparks from engine. After while he turn on little light and read sport magazine about Japanese baseball heroes. In middle of reading Mr. Yamamoto fall asleep and sleep for long long time. Little lights go by and train sing rumbling song in steel throat. Mr. Yamamoto smile in sleep, dreaming of big Suki-Yaki banquet with much saki.

All at once Mr. Yamamoto wide awake. He realize somebody has begin to pull back curtains of berth. Then curtains open and Mr. Yamamoto too surprised to speak. Beautiful girl in blue silk kimono is inside curtains. She take off kimono and climb into berth beside Mr. Yamamoto. Even if eyes open Mr. Yamamoto realize

she is Mr. Jackson daughter and walk in sleep and he put out hand to wake her then stop. Her eyes do not see him and she give tired sign and close them still sound of sleep. Mr. Yamamoto cannot help to see beautiful white skin like lotus petal above lace of night dress. Skin of breast flutter like poppy petal in breeze over where heart beat. Her face very quiet and peaceful with breath even and slow.

Mr. Yamamoto remember oriental proverb: When in doubt to do nothing. He lie quietly and think what to do. He think to wake girl with very gentle touch, but then he fear she scream very loud to see face of strange man and people come to see what trouble cause by foreign Japanese man to beautiful white girl.

He wonder about getting out of berth to find Mr. Jackson and come and get daughter but man with stomach also have impossible time to get out of berth without wake up beautiful girl.

Mr. Yamamoto think a long time. He think about his honorable ancestors. He think what his wise grandfather would do in berth with beautiful girl to scream at any moment.

Engine up ahead in distance whistle gently and train go through small town with many lights without stopping. Outside of berth in aisle, someone go by and bump against curtains. Mr. Yamamoto think about all of people asleep in car and about Mr. Jackson who is very kind man. He look again at beautiful girl and face remind him of lovely geisha girl with white skin and long lash on eyes in café in Tokyo. Outside of berth, person pass again bumping on curtain and giving cough from throat. Beautiful girl beside Mr. Yamamoto stir in sleep and turn head. She look very sad and say something soft with red lips moving. Mr. Yamamoto feel strange feeling along spine but stay very quiet for fear of wake her. Since death of faithful wife several years ago, Mr. Yamamoto very lonely man. He watch face of beautiful girl for some time. She sleep very peacefully. Train whistle again in distance with mournful sound.

After thinking carefully, Mr. Yamamoto turn over with face toward window and go to sleep without disturbing beautiful girl.

Lights fly past window and train sing rumbling song and poppy petals flutter over heart and Mr. Yamamoto snore contented snore in sleep.

Next when he wake up he see waving grass outside window and golden shine of sun. He turn his head around and see that beautiful

girl is gone. Mr. Yamamoto turn head again and look out of window and smile. He see the shadow of train rush along like swiftly shot arrow while wind blow grass and he keep eyes in distance thinking of old Japanese saying his father tell him when little boy. In the shadow of arrow there are birds flying.

TITTY'S DEAD AND TATTY WEEPS

By URSULA MACDOUGALL

(From *New Stories*)

THAT noise must have been Ella's door banging shut. I shouldn't have thought I could hear it across the street, but on a clear cold night like this you can hear every sound. There go her heavy overshoes clumping down her front steps. Funny how all the spring goes out of your feet when you're past sixty. I've noticed that about my own — hardly worth picking them up and putting them down plunk so many times in a day. I'll just stand here and listen through the door until I'm sure that Ella's coming here. Oh, I know very well she'll be over here in a minute, filling all my living-room, overflowing into every corner of my house, and my life, telling me what to do now that Sally's gone. Don't you walk across that street, Ella. I can't have you in my house tonight, not even for an hour. Now that Sally's dead I don't need advice from anybody — you, Ella, or Martha Yates either. *Titty's dead and Tatty weeps and the stool hops and the broom sweeps*. What's that story popping into my head for all day long, over and over? First thing in the morning and when I wake up in the night. I hadn't thought of it for years and now I can't get away from it. It's worse since I got back two days ago — the first time I've been alone in the house. I'm glad I dismissed Mary, though. No matter what I wanted, she would have kept on doing things the way Sally liked them done.

I don't believe Ella crossed the street after all. There's no use my waiting here in the hall for her. She must have gone to Martha Yates's house. She'll bring her here. They'll both think I was terribly heartless to let Mary go, after so many years in my family. It was heartless of me, too, and I'll never forget her face when I told her, and right after the funeral. I might have waited a day. 'I'm going to Bermuda, Mary,' I said, 'and when I get back I shall want someone younger and stronger for the housework.' I wanted to cry, but how could I have kept her? She turned the Delft vases on the mantel flower side out again when I had changed them to the

windmill side the very hour Sally was brought home. It was too plain a sign of how things would be, the house not a bit my house with Mary here remembering Sally's ways, and how I used to give in to her. *Titty mouse and Tatty mouse both lived in a house, Titty mouse went a-leasing and Tatty mouse went a-leasing, so they both went a-leasing.* I've got to stop saying those silly words. I can remember exactly how that English Fairy Tales book looked — grey with lavender letters. It was third from the right, second shelf from the bottom in the nursery bookcase. Nana read it to us so often we knew it by heart. *Titty mouse leased an ear of corn and Tatty mouse leased an ear of corn, so they both leased an ear of corn.* No, I oughtn't to have dismissed Mary, if for no other reason than that she was Nana's daughter. And all she said was, 'Miss Susan, I don't understand. I've been with you and your sister thirty-two years.' Ella and Martha Yates will have something to say about that when they get here — and they're sure to come because Ella told me this morning in the post office that they'd be over tonight. So they could help me arrange things, she said. If I'd been the one killed they'd have known better than to try to arrange things for Sally!

It's been like that all along. I'm the 'quiet Winslow girl.' I can remember in our high school days how both the boys who came Sunday evenings really came to see Sally. I could have laughed and made jokes, too, if Sally's laugh hadn't been so loud and jolly and her jokes such funny ones. 'Oh, Susan's always been solemn,' she'd say to them, 'Haven't you, Susie?' *'Then,' said the door, 'I'll jar,' so the door jarred.* I never was sure what that meant — did it mean stay ajar? 'The Three Sillies' was in that book, and 'Nimmy Nimmy Not, your name's Tom Tit Tot,' and 'Master of All Masters.' That was the funniest. We used to laugh till our stomachs ached over White-faced Siminy. Sally always hoped for a white-faced kitten to name that.

They'll be here any minute now. I don't suppose I have to stand here any longer waiting for them. Only I'd like to decide what I'm going to say to them. Oh, I don't want them to come. They'll spoil it. I've been a different person since Sally died. I think I've been myself and Sally too. All the time in Bermuda and on the boat I felt like Sally. Nobody knew I was supposed to be shy, so for once I could use my tongue and talk when I wanted to. I played shuffleboard to make a fourth one day just because no one expected

me to hang back and refuse. And at the hotel they said I was a friendly person. That was the way I felt inside too. I still do. I want to stay this way, like Sally, and not be afraid. I believe I changed the very minute I knew that Sally was dead. I didn't have time to plan how I'd feel. When they brought her home and laid her on the bed, I felt strong suddenly. It may have been her strength that went into me. Even at the funeral I wasn't unhappy. I seemed new all over to myself — like a butterfly just out of its chrysalis. *Now there was an old form outside the house and when the window creaked the form said, 'Window, why do you creak?' 'Oh,' said the window, 'Titty's dead and Tatty weeps and the stool hops and the broom sweeps, the door jars and so I creak.' 'Then,' said the old form, 'I'll run round the house.' So the old form ran around the house.*

Now that's what my going to Bermuda was like — like the old form running around the house. It's what Sally would have done if I'd been the one to die and nobody would have been surprised. But 'So unlike you, Susan,' they said. Anyway, I've learned now what sort of person I might have been. I'm like Sally, but only when people like Sally aren't around. There's only room for one really free person in any family, I suppose, and Sally chose that rôle for herself. What happened to me didn't matter. Of course I loved her. She was your older sister, Susan Winslow, you and she were inseparable. You were like a cup and saucer or a hook and eye. But I didn't cry at the cemetery — I didn't feel like crying even. Instead, those foolish words kept saying themselves over and over to me, interrupting my grieving over Sally. *Titty mouse made a pudding and Tatty mouse made a pudding. So they both made a pudding. And Tatty mouse put her pudding into the pot to boil but when Titty went to put hers in the pot tumbled over and scalded her to death.*

If I should get Mary back she'd listen and say nothing when I ordered buttered carrots with the lamb, but when she served the dinner there'd be peas, the way Sally always planned it. Thirty-two years she said she'd been with us. But suppose she had heard me yesterday singing those negro spirituals at the top of my voice — she knew that Sally was the one who sang and that it was Sally that had bursts of noisiness like that — 'Miss Susan's the quiet one.' Oh, I'd never have dared to open my mouth to sing a note with

Mary in the house. And then what if she had caught me this morning eating tomato soup for breakfast and a sardine sandwich? 'Miss Susan was never one for changes,' she liked to say about me, 'Always a three-minute egg and two pieces of light brown toast for her.' *Then Tatty sat down and wept; then a three-legged stool said, 'Tatty, why do you weep?' 'Titty's dead,' said Tatty, 'and so I weep.' Then said the stool, 'I'll hop,' so the stool hopped.* But Ella will think I should have kept Mary — she'll say so, too. She won't know I have to have someone new here who won't know I'm different now from the person I used to be. And Martha Yates will back Ella up and they'll scold me, too, just the way they're used to hearing Sally do. Perhaps they won't say anything tonight about the living room furniture's being all changed around, but I'll see them looking.

I think that's Martha's door shutting. I'll open this one a little and listen. Yes, they're on their way here now. Ella said they would have a plan to suggest. They don't know I have a plan, too. If Bob hadn't died of pneumonia that winter when we were young, Sally would have married, and I would have lived with her all these years. In that case I'dn't really be like her, now. Joe Hendricks said to me this morning outside the chain store, 'Why, the trip did you good, Susan! I've never seen you looking so hearty — more like your sister than yourself.' It was after I met Ella at the post office that I saw Joe. He kept me talking — didn't seem to want to go on. After all, we're the only people left in town he calls by their first names, Sally and me. Poor fellow! He said he didn't have much to live for any more except his walk to the post office and the chance of a word with an old friend like me now and then. He almost cried telling me how they're going to tear down the Carter House and put a block of stores there. 'I've lived in that hotel for twenty years,' he said, 'in the same room all that time.' It was the way he said Sally and I have always been able to cheer him up more than anybody ('You two always knew how to get some fun out of life,' he said) that put the notion into my head. He thinks I'm just like Sally, because she always did the talking and I never opened my mouth except to agree with her.

I thought it all out on my way home from the marketing. Ella would drop dead if she knew the letter's all written and in my pocket. After they go tonight, I'll walk to the corner and mail it so

that I won't change my mind. I've made it very clear to him that it's a favour to me, not to him. I couldn't say that, with him in my house so old and mournful and set in his ways, I'd be able to keep the new self that's grown out of the me Sally left behind her. I told him in the letter, 'You mustn't be afraid of what they'll say about us, Joe. The whole town will laugh, of course, but they'll all know we're both past the age for foolishness' That ought to make it seem all right to him — not as if I had any ideas in my head. It will upset the church people to have me marry so soon after Sally's death — but with him to look after and plan for and with a new maid who won't stand there with her mouth open if I tell him a funny joke — well, Sally won't be so dead as people think she is. I'll hold the letter tight like this all the time they are here. Perhaps I'll say, toss it off as Sally would, 'I'm thinking of getting married. My plans are made, so don't trouble yourselves about me.' But I'd better not mention Joe's name to them, until he's had time to answer.

They're turning into the gate now. Overshoes make a queer squeak on hard-packed snow. I wish I hadn't changed the furniture around just yet, they are sure to notice. Oh, don't come in. Please go away, don't ring my doorbell. They know me so well — the way Sally and Mary knew me. I needn't open the door — I don't have to. I can call to them through this panel and say I have a sore throat and can't see them tonight. What was that story with the name we couldn't ever remember? It was in the same book — something about The Laidly Worm. That picture always gave me the shivers, but I didn't have to hurry past it fast so as not to see — the way I did with The Golden Arm. His wife stood there in her grave clothes, wanting her arm. He was half sitting up in bed, just catching sight of her in the doorway. There was another story named the Golden something — it came just after Titty Mouse and Tatty Mouse — *So the walnut tree shed all its leaves and the little bird moulted all its feathers.*

Up the steps now, overshoes stamping off the snow on the porch. Their voices are too loud. 'Come in, Ella. It's nice to see you, Martha. I'm glad you could both come over tonight.' I've said those words. Now they'll say words, too, but I'll be holding on to the letter, stamped and ready in my pocket. I'll listen to what they say, but I'll mail it when they've gone. Martha's eyes are on the

furniture. Now she's saying, 'Quite a few changes here, I see, Susan.' I don't need to answer anything. Ella's saying that I ought to try to get more rest, I look worn out and no wonder, she's saying. She's glad I'm back so she can look after me and chirk me up a bit, she says. She's saying she has a perfectly marvellous plan to tell me. She says I'm to wait — just wait till she tells me. Now we're sitting down — it's nice to be sitting. The Delft vases are still windmill-side-out, the way I put them again when Mary left. I wonder if Ella knows what I did about Mary — she won't like it, when she knows. Ella's voice is laughing — it sounds so sure. It shrivels me up so that it's hard to listen. She's saying that she's all alone and that I'm all alone now, too, and that I'm to rent this house and move over to her house with her and that I'm to bring Mary with me. She says I won't have any worries any more and wouldn't Sally be pleased? Ella's excited, she's quite out of breath.

Now I must say something to her. I'll say, 'What a kind idea! We must talk it over.'

That's what I meant to say, but I think I heard my voice saying something quite different. I think I said, '*Then,*' said the old man, '*I'll tumble off the ladder and break my neck.*' I must have spoken quite softly because they didn't seem to understand. 'What?' That was Martha Yates asking me, crossly, too. 'What on earth are you muttering, Susan?' That was Ella.

'I said that I thought we ought to think it over and not be hasty.' That was my voice, so I said that.

Now I think Ella is getting angry at me. Her voice sounds louder. 'Nonsense,' she is saying. 'I tell you there's no need to think it over or even discuss it. It's much the best arrangement for you. Everything's settled. All you have to do, Susan, is to agree.'

Ella is telling me a lot more about how it will be living in her house. Martha Yates is saying Yes and Yes. I don't know just when I crumpled up my letter, but I can feel it all wrinkled now in my pocket. Well, I suppose it doesn't matter, much. I can't seem to listen to Ella when her voice goes on and on so without ever stopping. If she would speak more softly I would know what she's saying. She and Martha Yates seem to be feeling very pleased about something. While they're talking I'll just finish up — the words keep crowding down on me, faster. There's no need to go on

shoving them out of my mind. So he tumbled off the ladder and broke his neck. And when the old man broke his neck, the great walnut tree fell down with a crash and upset the old form and the house, and the house falling knocked the window out and the window knocked the door down and the door upset the broom, and the broom upset the stool and poor little Tatty mouse was buried beneath the ruins.

LET NOTHING YOU DISMAY¹

By ALLEN MCGINNIS

(From *The Southern Review*)

THEY sat, the two of them, in the hotel room — heavy, relaxed, and contemplative. There had been exactly twenty-two minutes of complete silence between them, and in the last fifteen they had been taking obvious pains that their eyes should not meet. Finally, with a scraping of his chair that sounded unnaturally loud in the quietness, the man rose and went into the bathroom. Presently his wife's thin voice with its peculiar nasal twang split the air.

'Arthur, stop that belching!'

A great sigh from the bathroom. 'It's that pumpkin pie, sweetheart. I guess I shouldn't of ate it — but hell, you gotta do something excitin' on Christmas Eve.'

'Well, what would you think of me if I went strollin' around burping all over the place simply because it's Christmas Eve?'

The man came through the door of the bathroom and threw his broad bulk on the bed. He unbuttoned his vest and the top of his trousers — and groaned.

'It'd tickle the hell outta me to have you do anything out of your usual routine, my little buttercup — seein' as how this is Christmas Eve.'

The reply was dipped in vinegar: 'Do you have any suggestions?'

'Well, let's see. I'd like to hear *you* burp just once — if your kidneys could stand the back-fire.'

'I guess you think you're bein' very funny, Arthur. It's not my fault we're stuck in a God-forsaken hotel room every Christmas. I've tried to tell you —'

The man cut her short with a groan, and slapped the bed with the back of his hand. 'For God's sake, Annie, let's don't get into a row tonight. It ain't your fault. It ain't my fault. It ain't nobody's fault! We're just — *here!* We might as well get a few laughs out of it — if we can.'

¹ Copyright, 1936, by The Louisiana State University.

She looked at him intently for a moment, and then leaned over and patted his hand. 'I know, Arthur. Guess we both ate too much, though how we go on eating this hotel food, year after year, beats me.'

His answer was a weary grunt.

Silence settled on the two-and-a-half room. Twenty-two stories below, the night traffic hummed and zoomed in alternate crescendos and diminuendos that beat with a faint but steady persistence on their ears. When at last the man spoke, his voice sounded harsh and strained.

'Have you noticed how quiet Christmas is in these hotels any more?'

'Yeah. Seems nobody goes out.'

He grinned. 'I can remember when the hotels we stopped at on Christmas had swell dances and a big tree in the lobby on Christmas morning.'

'Yeah. Those were the days.'

He turned on his side to face her. 'There's a dance down on the mezzanine tonight, Annie. Wanna go?'

She sucked her lower lip between her teeth and stared at the carpet. 'Oh, I will if you want to, Arthur. But my corn is givin' me fits tonight. Besides, it'll be just a bunch of silly kids.'

He flopped over again on his back. 'Yeah. And they'd probably be pie-eyed by now, too.'

'Yeah. By now.'

She began drumming her nails on the arm of her chair. He plucked absently at the counterpane. Suddenly he threw his legs to the floor and sat up on the edge of the bed. His back was toward his wife.

'Annie, let's you and me get tight tonight!'

For a moment she did not answer, and then she spoke decisively. 'No, Arthur. I don't think we ought to do any drinkin' tonight. This is *one* Christmas that I'd like to go to church in the morning — and you're goin' with me.'

He got up at that and began walking around the room. 'All right, mamma. I'll make a bargain with you. I'll go to church with you in the morning if you'll have a few highballs with me tonight.'

'What about your stomach, Arthur? You know what the doctor told you in Wichita about drinking, and you're not really over that

spell you had in Springfield yet. And as I always say, you only have one stomach and —'

'To hell with my stomach! If we sit here in this damned room much longer and stare at each other we'll both go nuts.'

Once again she suddenly found the pattern of the carpet intensely interesting. 'I guess you're right. There's really nothing else to do.'

He crossed over to the telephone. 'I'll call a boy. He'll probably take the gold out of our teeth, especially since it's Christmas Eve.'

A caramel-colored negro appeared at the door in a few minutes. He grinned knowingly, disappeared, and was back with two pint bottles in a paper sack.

'You must've had this in a bathtub down the hall,' the man observed. 'Now let's have some ginger ale and ice.'

When the negro had disappeared for the second time, Arthur began fixing the drinks.

'Let's make the first one a little strong, whaddeya say, mamma?'

'All right, Arthur, you know best.'

He handed her a glass and set his own down on the telephone stand beside the bed. Then he propped himself up against the pillows and stretched out his legs comfortably. With a long, luxurious sigh he took the glass from the stand and began sipping his drink. She toyed with hers for a while, and then downed it rapidly, in gulps.

'We make faces at it but we love it,' he sighed.

She dried her lips. 'I'm goin' to quit drinkin' highballs. It takes so long to get one down.'

'You know, buttercup, I —'

'Don't call me "buttercup."'

'Well, I was thinkin', mamma, why you didn't take up some hobby or sideline to while away the time. Knittin' fancy rugs, for instance.'

'Knittin' fancy rugs! My God, what are you gonna spring on me next?'

'Well, other women do it. I see 'em in the pictures.'

'Yeah? Well, other women ain't lugged over the countryside six days of the week just like so much freight. You want me to knit fancy rugs, huh? How would you like totin' a rug frame around in the back end of the car? And what would we do with 'em — if and

when I ever finished one? Hang 'em up on the walls of a different hotel room every night? Wouldn't that be sweet!'

He waved his hand feebly. 'All right, all right. Don't bring the house dick up! It was just a suggestion. I was only tryin' to help you out, seein' as how you're so darned dissatisfied all the time lately.'

'What gave you the idea I was dissatisfied?'

'Idea! If it was only an *idea*, I might be able to do somethin' about it. Hell, it's gettin' to be more like a religion with you.'

Her nostrils quivered suspiciously. 'Arthur, I've not let a word of complaint come out of my mouth in I don't know how many months. It's not fair for you to lay there and try to tell me —'

'I know you ain't said nothin' mamma. It's just that you ain't been lookin' well, and you've lost all your old ginger. I don't know what to do about it. It's got me licked.'

She did not reply. Finally the man drained his glass and crossed to the dresser.

'You want that straight one now?' he asked.

She nodded.

He handed her the glass and they touched rims.

'Well, here's to a Merry Christmas!'

At those words her glass halted suddenly before her lips. She blinked her eyes quickly two or three times, and then gulped her drink. The man went over to her and somehow managed to poise his broad thigh on the arm of the chair. He patted her shoulder awkwardly with a fat, pudgy hand.

'Don't let it get you, mamma. It'll be better when Wilbur gets here.'

At that she raised her eyes to his, and they gleamed wetly in the light. 'Where do you suppose he is, Arthur? He wired us he'd get in this afternoon.'

'Well, he might've been called into the office all of a sudden. Besides, he wrote me he was tryin' hard to swing that deal in Topeka.'

'But he *promised* us, Arthur. Surely he won't let somethin' hold him up this time — not on Christmas Eve.'

The man rose from the chair and took the woman's empty glass. He wet his lips speculatively, and after a moment he answered with a good deal of hesitation.

'Well, Annie, I wouldn't bank on it too much if I was you. You know how it is with the kid. He's tryin' to close the year with a good business so he can earn that bonus, and there'll be pretty brisk buyin' right through to the first of the year. He might not be able to tear away and come on down here after all.'

She rose a trifle uncertainly from the chair and advanced on her husband threateningly.

'Brisk buyin', my eye! There won't be a single order given from now till the first of the year in anybody's line. If Wilbur don't meet us here for Christmas like he promised, it means he's gone on another binge with that Kansas City bunch, and if he has, I'm goin' up there myself this time.'

'Now there, there, *mamma*! I didn't say Wilbur *wasn't* goin' to be here. I just said he might not get away.'

After a moment he was able to lead her back to her chair, where she sat down again with some reluctance. Then he grinned at her disarmingly.

'Y'know what the Governor of North Carolina said to the Governor of South Carolina?' he asked, his eyebrows raised high in an evident glow of anticipation of her reply.

'Yeah,' she answered, shaking her head in weary assent. 'I know all about what the Governors of the Carolinas said to each other.'

The eyebrows dropped suddenly to their normal position.

'Would it kill you to crack a smile?'

'Not if I had somethin' to laugh at.'

Once more he poured out two straight drinks of the yellow fluid. 'This time we won't drink to nothin', he announced.

The woman began eyeing her suddenly empty glass with a curious interest. 'You know, Arthur, these glasses are a lot like that set we had when we lived in Wichita. Do you remember 'em?'

He dried his lips and drew in a big breath before he answered. 'Remember 'em!' he said, and laughed hugely. 'How could I forget 'em when I've been payin' storage on all that stuff we had at Wichita for nearly fifteen years now!'

The woman sniffed ominously. 'Is that all anything means to you — how much it costs?'

'Well now, what else is there to remember about that set of glasses?'

'Nothing. Nothing at all. They just happened to be your present to me on our fifth anniversary.'

'Oh!' he said, and busied himself with his glass.

'I should've known it.'

'You should've knowed what?'

'I should've known when you wouldn't come back to St. Louis to marry me at home where the folks had everything all fixed, that my life would always be like this.'

'Good Lord, Annie, are we in for all that again?' He sighed, and loosened his collar. 'I told you I had to be at that convention in Memphis. There ain't no way of gettin' out of an annual convention. Besides, I thought it'd make a nice honeymoon.'

'Nice honeymoon! Four days that was one long drunk, if I remember right. And when you were in the room with me you couldn't talk for the ice pack on your head. That's the way my honeymoon was. That's the way my whole life has been.'

'Well, mamma, you know how those conventions are.'

She got up from the chair, crossed to the bed, and sat down beside him.

'Arthur, if you'd quit right then when I asked you to, you could be in some good business of your own this very minute.'

He shook a protesting finger in her face. 'Now lissen here, Annie. I did quit for you once when I was senior salesman for Delight Flour. Left one of the best jobs on the road. For what? A chicken farm in Joplin. That was *your* idea.'

'If you'd stuck with it —'

'Yeah, if I'd stuck with it we'd be dustin' our bottoms in some county poor farm. Hell, I told you I didn't know nothin' about chickens.'

'You mean that particular kind of chicken!'

'And could I help it if their tail feathers began comin' out at the wrong time of the year? And wavin' a ten-spot in front of their beaks wouldn't lure one little egg from 'em.'

For a moment she seemed to have no answer. Then her now slightly blood-shot eyes brightened. 'Well, you've got the chicken farm to thank for Wilbur.'

He raised from his pillow. 'Whaddaya mean?'

The woman laughed slightly. 'Well, if we hadn't stopped for a little while in Joplin, we never would have had time enough to —'

'Annie! I'm ashamed of you.'

She dropped her eyes. 'It's the truth, though. That one short year in Joplin is the nearest I ever came to havin' a real home. It's all I got to look back to even if the chickens didn't have any feathers.'

With a disgusted sigh Arthur plopped back into his pillow.

'Well, it's Wilbur you got to thank that we got away from that chicken farm.'

'Meanin' what?'

'Meanin' that after he got here I damned sure had to make a living.'

'I suppose you didn't even want to be bothered with Wilbur, did you?'

'Who said I didn't want Wilbur.'

'You hinted as much.'

'You're nuts.'

'Thank you. *Thank you.* I'm glad I do have Wilbur. He's all that keeps my heart from breakin' entirely —'

'Hell, your heart has been breakin' ever since I've known you.'

She paused in horrified breathlessness. 'Arthur, you keep on talkin' to me like that and I'll — I'll get a divorce!'

'Don't see how,' he said, turning on his side and smoothing his pillow with superb nonchalance. 'God knows you could never claim desertion with you trailin' me all over the country. And I've always supported you.'

'Yeah. You've been a model husband, and I've been kept up in grand style. A candy salesman's wife. Keller's Double Dipped Delights. I might as well be one of your damned boxes of candy, or your order book, or your brief case. You throw me in the car and haul me around just like you do them. I got no home. No friends. Nothin'. And you say I don't have grounds for a divorce.'

'Why the hell don't you go ahead and get one then?'

'Don't be so cock-sure, you fat ox. Are you forgettin' that time I brought Wilbur down to Dallas for a surprise visit and caught you with that blonde hussy who owned that drug-store chain?'

He sat up on the bed as though he operated on springs.

'Now lissen! I've told you before I was sellin' that lady one of the biggest deals I ever put over in my life.'

'It was a funny way to close any kind of an order.'

'Annie, we're gonna settle this once and for all —'

The metallic clang of the telephone bell stopped him. He jumped from the bed and took down the receiver.

'Hello... yes... yes, I'll hold the line.'

She circled the bed and came over to him. 'Who is it?'

'Sh-h-h! Kansas City callin'. Guess it's Wilbur.'

There was a moment's silence, and he began talking.

'Hello... hello... Hello, Wilbur... Yeah, this is me... Oh, we're okay. She's right here beside me... What's that? I can't hear you... Click your receiver. Seems there's a helluva lot of noise at your end of the line... There's nothin' wrong with me... What did you say? I can't hear... You won't be able to get away?... But Wilbur, your mamma and me was countin' on you... What's that?... I'm talkin' as loud as I can... What the hell's the matter with you?'

She reached for the receiver.

'Give me that phone, Arthur. I'll find out why he's not comin' down.'

Her own shrill voice echoed in the room.

'Hello, Wilbur?... This is mamma... Why ain't you comin' down, sweetheart?... Well, they gave you the week off last year... I can't hear you... Isn't that someone playin' a piano, Wilbur?... Wilbur, I can't hear you. Talk louder... Wilbur, are you drunk?... Sober as a judge! You don't talk like it... Wilbur, don't you run around with that bunch up there. You know how much trouble you got into the last time... Well, can't you just come down for a day or so? Your papa and me would sure like to see you... Tell 'em to stop playin' that damned piano... Wilbur, don't you do any more drinkin'... All right... All right... Merry Christmas, yourself... Goodbye.'

She hung up the receiver and stared at the wall before her.

'Well, he just ain't comin' down, that's all. Said something about the boss wantin' him to stay in the office for the rest of the year.'

'Yeah. I sorta expected they would.'

'Well, that's that.'

'Yeah. That's that.'

Once more he went over to the dresser. But the woman sank into a chair, her hands folded listlessly in her lap.

When Arthur finished preparing the drinks he glanced at her warily; when he held out the glass his voice was a little too casual, a

little too smooth and easy. 'Well, we can always have another little snifter. Here, take this. It'll do you good.'

She stared at the glass, at the ice which tinkled against the sweating edges, at the cool, golden color of the fluid. Suddenly she sprang from the chair and knocked the glass from the man's hands.

'Drink! Yes, have a drink! It's all you think about, if you ever really think about anything. There Wilbur is, dead drunk up in Kansas City with that scum he runs around with, and you ask me to have a drink!'

He backed against the dresser and set his own drink down.

'Now, mamma, Wilbur might've had a few drinks, but I wouldn't say he was —'

'Wilbur was drunk! I can always tell. And he was at a party.'

'Annie, there's no use gettin' yourself worked up over it. It's Christmas Eve. The kid's entitled to a little fun.'

She gave a loud, raucous laugh that was tinged with hysteria.

'Yeah. What's the good of doin' anything? You've done the trick. You got him a job as a travelin' salesman, and you can find an excuse for everything he pulls.'

'Sure I got him the job.'

'Didn't I beg you not to?'

'He'd been out of college four months and hadn't turned his hand. He wanted to go on the road. Why should he sit on his rear end all his life just because he had some crazy letters tacked on behind his name?'

She began crying noisily. 'There you are. That's what I've got to put up with the rest of my life. My husband and son — travelin' salesmen. One just like the other.'

With a groan he turned to the dresser and grabbed the drink he had placed there. He downed it in one gulp.

'Now lissen to me, Annie. You're makin' a fool of yourself, and I'm gettin' sick of it. Here it is Christmas Eve, and all you can do is rave around and bawl about me and Wilbur bein' travelin' salesmen.'

Slowly, a little unsteadily, she rose to her feet and drew herself up to her full height.

'All right, Arthur. I'll quit trying to do anything with either of you. But get this. Either you quit the road and settle down or I'll — I'll divorce you!'

He gazed at her intently, and then laughed. 'You're drunk!'

She took another step toward him. Great tears began coursing down her cheeks and splashing on her bosom. 'I'm not drunk, Arthur. You've got to listen to me. I — I mean what I said. I mean, I'll — I'll actually get a divorce!'

With an effort he focused his gaze on the face that was very close to his own and peered steadily into her streaming eyes.

'Mamma, you're talkin' crazy. You don't know what you're sayin'.'

'Oh, can't you get it through your head, Arthur? I can't go on forever like this. Anything would be better. Anything.'

She collapsed on the bed. After a moment the man rested his own weight beside hers, and the springs groaned protestingly. With embarrassed awkwardness he patted her shaking shoulders.

'My God, Annie! I didn't know it was that bad. You should've told me.'

The shoulders began shaking the more fiercely. He swallowed with difficulty and resumed his pawing.

'You win, Annie! I'll quit. I'll quit for good. It was gettin' so I couldn't turn out a decent day's work anyway. I'll send in my resignation the first of the year. I guess we can find a way to keep from starvin'.'

He got up from the bed and went over to the dresser. There he poured out a very generous straight drink and held it up to his reflection in the mirror. 'Well, here's goodbye to the good old sellin' game!'

He gulped the drink. Then he set his glass down and began straightening his collar and tie. When that was finished he buttoned his vest, went to the closet, and took down his coat.

The woman had lifted her head and eyed him in growing astonishment. 'Where are you goin', Arthur?'

'Out!'

'Out?'

'Yes, *out!* This is Christmas Eve, Annie. I guess you'd plum forgotten about that — but I ain't. If I'm goin' to give up one of the best jobs I've ever had in my life on the first of the year I'm goin' out and celebrate joinin' the bread line.'

'Arthur, you shouldn't go out. It's late.'

He wheeled on her in sudden anger. 'Holy Snakes in Ireland,

woman, ain't I entitled to somethin'? I've done what you asked me to. What other man would give up the only thing he knows how to do to go back to — to a chicken farm? You can sit here in this room and bawl and rave and flood the hotel if you want to — but I'm gonna go out for one last fling — and believe me, it's gonna be a humdinger!'

The door slammed behind him.

Two bell-hops helped him into the room about three o'clock. His face was flushed and one eye was slightly swollen. He groaned aloud with the misery in his stomach.

The woman arose from her seat at the window and dismissed the two grinning negroes with generous tips. Then she dissolved a liberal dose of bicarbonate of soda in warm water and poured it down the inert figure. A few moments later she rushed him to the bathroom and held his head while he lost it between shuddering gasps that shook his body. When that was over she pushed him into bed with his clothes on and covered him up carefully. For a long while she stood looking down at the unconscious form, and after a while murmured aloud into the darkness:

'You poor fool! You poor, miserable fool!'

She undressed and crawled wearily in beside him. At the touch of her body the man flopped over heavily and gathered her into his arms.

'That you, mamma?'

'Yes, honey.'

He kissed her neck with long accustomed accuracy.

'Lissen, mamma, I met Tim Donahue down in the lobby when I left. And he told me old man Wellenberger down at Wichita Falls is ready for an order. Gonna start takin' inventory tomorrow and then he can place the order right away for delivery first of the year. And I was thinkin' — mamma, you lissenin?'

'Yeah.'

'Well, I was thinkin': "Shoot, what's the use of us hangin' around here in the lobby tomorrow and twiddlin' our thumbs just cause it's Christmas!" You see, mamma, if we started down there in the morning and took Christmas Day to get there I'd beat every candy salesman on the territory to Wellenberger's order, and that'd practically put my January quota in the bag.'

There was no answer.

'Mamma, did ya hear what I was talkin' about?'

'Yes, Arthur.'

'Well, whaddaya say?'

'Arthur, are you sure you want to go after Wellenberger's order? Ain't there somethin' you've forgot?'

'Forgot? Forgot what? Don't talk like you're drunk, mamma.'

'All right, Arthur. Anything you say. I'll leave a call for about eight. Is that all right?'

Once more the man's lips sought her neck. 'That's the old girl, mamma. I knew you'd want me to cop that order. Yeah. Leave a call for eight.'

When the woman had hung up the receiver and once more crawled into bed, her husband had turned over on his side. She lay there in the darkness for a few minutes and felt the tears trickle into her ears. Then she spoke softly:

'Arthur, I'd just like to ask one thing. Don't drive very fast tomorrow. We've got all day, and my back's nearly killin' me. Somehow I can't stand these long drives like I used to. Arthur, do you hear me? Are you asleep?'

But there was no answer. An old familiar sound filled her ears; a sound that all through the long years of her married life had somehow lulled her sorrows and heartaches into a quiet numbness. It was the regular rise and fall of her husband's snoring.

MAYBE THE SUN WILL SHINE^{*}

By WILLIAM MARCH

(From *Scribner's Magazine*)

THE nurse came into the room where Bill sat and glanced around to assure herself that everything was in readiness for the doctor. They weren't used to such famous men in hospitals of this sort, and she was afraid each time he came to see Bill that he would ask some question which she could not answer, some technical thing which she had learned in her probationary days and had promptly forgotten, such as, 'Define lymph, Miss Connors, and state briefly the purpose it serves in the economy of the body.'

She dragged her forefinger over the table, examined it critically for smudges, and looked briskly about her for a dustcloth. Since there was none, she lifted her uniform above her knees and held it away from her body while she wiped the table clean with her underskirt. She was conscious of the exposure of her thighs, and she turned her head slowly and looked at Bill. He was a strong, thick-set man with a muscular neck and a chest so solid that it seemed molded from the metals with which he had once worked. He was, she judged, about twenty-five. The fact that such a young, full-blooded man could neither see the charms that she exhibited, nor react to them, because of his blindness, as a man should, excited her, and she began to talk nervously:

'Well, I guess you'll be glad to get this over with. I guess you'll be glad to know for certain, one way or the other.'

'I know now,' said Bill. 'I'm not worrying. There's no doubt in my mind now, and there never was.'

'I must say you've been a good patient. You haven't been upset like most of them are.'

'Why should I worry?' asked Bill. 'I got the breaks this time, if ever a man did. If there ever was a lucky man it's me, if you know what I mean. I was lucky to have that big-time doctor operate on me for nothing just because my wife wrote and asked him to.' He

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laughed contentedly. 'Christ! Christ, but I got the breaks!... From the way he's treated me, you'd think I was a millionaire or the President of the United States or something.'

'That's a fact,' said Miss Connors thoughtfully. 'He's a fine man.' She noticed that she still held her uniform above her knees, and she dropped it suddenly, smoothing her skirt with her palms.

'What's he like?' asked Bill.

'Wait!' she said. 'You've waited a long time now, and if you wait a little longer maybe you'll be able to see what he looks like for yourself.'

'I'll be able to see all right, when he takes these bandages off,' said Bill. 'There's no question of maybe. I'll be able to see all right.'

'You're optimistic,' said the nurse. 'You're not downhearted. I'll say that for you.'

Bill said: 'What have I got to worry about? This sort of operation made him famous, didn't it? If he can't make me see again, who can?'

'That's right,' said the nurse. 'What you say is true.'

Bill laughed tolerantly at her doubts. 'They bring people to him from all over the world, don't they? You told me that yourself, Sister!... Well, what do you think they do it for? For the sea voyage?'

'That's right,' said the nurse. 'You got me there. I don't want to be a wet blanket. I just said *maybe*.'

'You didn't have to tell me what a fine man he is,' said Bill after a long silence. He chuckled, reached out and tried to catch hold of Miss Connor's hand, but she laughed and stepped aside. 'Don't you think I knew that myself?' he continued. 'I knew he was a fine man the minute he came into the hospital and spoke to me. I knew —' Then he stopped, leaned back in his chair, and rubbed the back of one hand with the fingers of the other. He had stopped speaking, he felt, just in time to prevent his sounding ridiculous. There was no point in explaining to Miss Connors, or anybody else, just how he felt in his heart about the doctor, or of his gratitude to him. There was no sense in talking about those things.

Miss Connors went to the table and rearranged the bouquet of asters which Bill's wife had brought for him the day before, narrowing her eyes and holding her face away from the flowers critically. She stopped all at once and straightened up.

'Listen!' she said. 'That's him now.'

'Yes,' said Bill.

Miss Connors went to the door and opened it. 'Well, Doctor, your patient is all ready and waiting for you. She backed away, thinking of the questions that a man of such eminence could ask if he really put his mind to it. 'I'll be outside in the corridor,' she went on. 'If you want me, I'll be waiting.'

The doctor came to where Bill sat and looked at him professionally, but he did not speak at once. He went to the window and drew the dark, heavy curtains. He was a small, plump man, with a high, domed forehead, whose hands were so limp, so undecided in their movements that it seemed impossible for them to perform the delicate operations that they did. His eyes were mild, dark blue and deeply compassionate.

'We were just talking about you before you came in,' said Bill. 'The nurse and me, I mean. I was trying to get her to tell me what you look like.'

The doctor pulled up a chair and sat facing his patient. 'I hope she gave a good report. I hope she wasn't too hard on me.'

'She didn't say,' said Bill. 'It wasn't necessary. I know what you look like without being told.'

'Tell me your idea and I'll tell you how right you are.'

He moved to the table, switched on a light, and twisted the bulb until it was shaded to his satisfaction.

'That's easy,' said Bill. 'You're a dignified man with snow-white hair, and I see you about a head taller than any man I ever met. Then you've got deep brown eyes that are kind most of the time but can blaze up and look all the way through a man if you think he's got any meanness in him, because meanness is the one thing you can't stand, not having any of it in you.'

The doctor touched his mild, compassionate eyes with the tips of his finger. 'You're a long way off,' he said laughingly. 'You're miles off this time, Bill.' He switched off the shaded light on the table, adjusted a reflector about his neck, and turned back to his patient, entirely professional again.

'The room is in complete darkness now,' he said. 'Later on, I'll let the light in gradually until your eyes get used to it. I generally explain that to my patients so they won't be afraid at first.'

'Christ!' said Bill scornfully. 'Did you think I didn't trust you?'

... Christ! I've got too much faith in you to be afraid.'

'I'll take off the bandages now, if you're ready.'

'Okay!' said Bill. 'I'm not worrying any.'

'Suppose you tell me about your accident while I work,' said the doctor after a pause. 'It'll keep your mind occupied and besides I never did understand the straight of it.'

'There's not much to tell,' said Bill. 'I'm married and I've got three kids, like my wife told you in her letter, so I knew I had to work hard to keep my job. They were laying off men at the plant every day, but I said it mustn't happen to me. I kept saying to myself that I had to work hard and take chances, being a man with responsibilities. I kept saying that I mustn't get laid off, no matter what happened.'

'Keep your hands down, Bill,' said the doctor mildly. 'Talk as much as you want to, but keep your hands in your lap.'

'I guess I overdone it,' continued Bill. 'I guess I took too many chances after all... Then that drill broke into about a dozen pieces and blinded me, but I didn't know what had happened to me at first. Well, you know the rest, Doc.'

'That was tough,' said the doctor. He sighed soundlessly and shook his head. 'That was tough luck.'

'What I am going to say may sound silly,' said Bill, 'but I want to say it once and get it off my chest, because there's nothing I'm not willing to do for a man like you, and I've thought about it a lot... Now here's what I want to say just one time: If you ever want me for anything, all you got to do is to say the word and I'll drop everything and come running, no matter where I am. And when I say anything, I mean *anything*, including my life... I just wanted to say it one time.'

'I appreciate that,' said the doctor, 'and I know you really mean it.'

'I just wanted to say it,' said Bill.

There was a moment's silence, and then the doctor spoke cautiously: 'Everything that could be done for a man was done for you, Bill, and there's no reason to think the operation was unsuccessful. But sometimes it doesn't work, no matter how hard we try.'

'I'm not worrying about that,' said Bill quietly, 'because I've got faith. I know, just as sure as I know I'm sitting here, that when you take off the bandages I'll be looking into your face.'

'You might be disappointed,' said the doctor slowly. 'You'd better take that possibility into consideration. Don't get your hopes too high.'

'I was only kidding,' said Bill. 'It don't make any real difference to me what you look like. I was kidding about what I said.' He laughed again. 'Forget it,' he said. 'Forget it.'

The doctor's small, delicate hands rested against his knees. He leaned forward a little and peered into his patient's face. His eyes had become accustomed to the darkness, and he could distinguish Bill's individual features plainly. He turned on the small, shaded light, shielding it with his palm. He sighed, shook his head, and rubbed his hands against his forehead with a thoughtful movement.

'Have you got some kids at home, too?' asked Bill.

The doctor went to the window. He pulled gently on the cord, and the thick curtains parted and slid back soundlessly. 'I have three little girls,' he said.

The autumn sunlight came strongly into the room and lay in a bright wedge across the floor, touching Bill's hands, his rough, uplifted face, and the wall beyond.

'Well, now, that's funny. I've got three little boys. . . . Can you beat that?'

'It's what they call a coincidence,' said the doctor.

He came back to the chair and stood between Bill and the sunlight. 'You can raise your hands now, if you want to,' he said wearily.

Bill lifted his hairy, oil-stained hands and rested them against his temples. He spoke with surprise.

'The bandages are off now, ain't they, Doc?'

'Yes.'

The doctor shook his head and moved to one side, and again the strong sunlight fell on Bill's broad, good-natured Slavick face.

'I don't mind telling you, now that I got my eyesight back,' said Bill, 'that I've been kidding about not being afraid. I've been scared to death most of the time, Doc, but I guess you knew that too. That's why I've been acting like a kid today, I guess. It's the relief of having it over and knowing that I can see again. . . . You can turn the light on any time you want to. I'm ready.'

The doctor did not answer.

'My old lady was in to see me yesterday,' continued Bill. 'She

said they're holding my job for me at the plant. I said to tell 'em I'd be there to claim it on Monday morning. I'll be glad to get back to work again.'

The doctor was still silent, and Bill, fearing that he had sounded ungrateful, added quickly: 'I've had a fine rest these last weeks, and everybody has been pretty damned good to me, but I want to get back to work now, Doc. I'm a family man and I've got responsibilities. My wife and kids would starve to death without me there to take care of them, and I can't afford to waste too much time. You know how it is with your own work, I guess.'

The doctor went to the door, and spoke gently. 'Nurse!... Nurse, you'd better come in now.'

She entered at once, went to the table, and stood beside the vase of asters. She looked up after a moment and examined Bill's face. He seemed entirely different with the bandages removed, and younger, even, than she had thought. His eyes were round, incorruptibly innocent, and of an odd shade of clear, child-like hazel. They softened, somehow, his blunt hands, his massive chin, and his thick, upstanding hair. They changed his entire face, she thought, and she realized that if she had not seen them she would never have really understood his character, nor would she have had the least idea of how he appeared to the people who knew him before his accident. As she watched him, thinking these things, he smiled again, pursed his lips, and turned his head in the doctor's direction.

'What's the matter with you?' he asked jokingly. 'What are you waiting for? ... You're not looking for a tin cup and a bundle of pencils to hand me, are you?' He laughed again. 'Come on, Doc,' he said. 'Don't keep me in suspense this way. You can't expect me to know what you look like until you turn on the lights, now can you?'

The doctor did not answer.

Bill threw out his arms and yawned contentedly, moved in his chair, and almost succeeded in facing the nurse who still stood beside the table. He smiled and winked humorously at the vacant wall, a yard to the left of where Miss Connors waited.

The doctor spoke. 'I'm about five feet, eight inches tall,' he began in his hesitant, compassionate voice. 'I weigh around a hundred and seventy-five pounds, so you can imagine how paunchy I'm

getting to be. I'll be fifty-two years old next spring, and I'm getting bald. I've got on a gray suit and tan shoes.' He paused a moment, as if to verify his next statement. 'I'm wearing a blue necktie today,' he continued, 'a dark blue necktie with white dots in it.'

A BLADE OF GRASS*

By EDITA MORRIS

(From *Story*)

HER island lay in green, frothy seas, well away from the mainland. She had lived upon it thirty years, feeding and cleaning little brothers, little sisters, helping old people into the sun, keeping watch over the sick, washing the dead.

One day, cleaning herring at dawn, she saw the sea lying smooth as oil; one easily could have walked on it. As it was rare that the waters thereabouts were not raging and foaming, she took this peculiar silken smoothness to have special meaning; by the time the pailfuls of fish were cleaned, she had thought out, or rather, as the process was made with her body, not her brain, had felt out the meaning of the flat, unstirring sea: she was to cross it and go to the mainland. That same moment she felt that her feet wanted to move; she hitched the two pails over her shoulder, spilt some water over her legs to sluice away the fish scales, then followed the bidding of her feet.

Once they had made their way down from the rocks, they turned sharply off their usual path, and moved up the straight road leading to the pastor's house. As she walked, she looked at them — big, whitened from the mealy dust of the road; they never hesitated, nor slowed down, but worked their way steadily onward, the toes always pointing straight toward the pastor's farm. Arrived at the door, she put down her loads, knocked, and asked if the pastor were in. She was told that he had rowed to another island to christen or to bury; she had better come back the following day. She nodded, and bent down to take her pails; but her feet felt rooted to the sun-warmed stone steps; there was no movement in them. Again she lowered her pails, and settling on the edge of one of them, she said that she must wait.

By midday the pastor had not come. The servant brought her part of a loaf of bread, still warm. She took it, thanked her for it,

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then dipped her hand in the pail and felt about in the briny water, pinching and weighing each fat, gleaming fish between her fingers before handing one to the servant.

'For me?' the maid asked.

'As thanks for the bread,' she said.

Nor did the afternoon bring the pastor. She took off her apron and covered the pails, so that the fish should not rot in the steaming heat, and then seated herself again, putting her hands to sleep in her lap. The day passed. Again the maid brought bread, this time with dripping; she thanked her with two fishes.

Between dusk and full dark the pastor came hurrying. She got up, wiped her big hand on her dress, and offered it.

'I must go away, pastor.'

'Away, dear child?'

'Yes, to the mainland.'

'To the mainland? So-o? It will be bad for many if you go — it will be bad for the old people and for the children.'

'Yes, pastor.'

'But you *must* go.'

'Um-m. It's so decided. I need the pastor's help.'

'So?'

'The pastor must write to the seminary and tell them that I should have my training free.'

'You want to become a deaconess?'

'Yes, it is so decided.'

'There are those who'll feel it hard when you go, dear child.'

'I'm thirty years old, pastor; my morning's work is over — there is afternoon work for me now. That lies elsewhere — on the mainland.'

Without anxiety, without wondering what was to happen, she worked steadily through each week that intervened between her talk with the pastor and the arrival of the letter from the seminary. One day it lay, very white, on the large worn eating table; she smiled at it because it looked so fresh and light, like a bird blown in from distant parts. This being the first letter she had received, she handed it to her mother, judging that to be a fitting thing to do; then she moved a little away, as if the words to be released were unruly bees from which it was safer to keep one's distance. After each sentence that her mother read to her, she nodded; only when the

letter mentioned certain rare qualities of hers about which the pastor must have written, did her head refrain from nodding assent; she walked a little further off, because this praise seemed to her meaningless and nothing for her ear to admit.

A week later she stepped into the flat-bottomed rowboat that made connection with the mainland. Two men pulled at its four stout oars; beneath her feet a pig squealed, kicking in a sack; she paid no attention — it did not occur to her to shift her place. The little cluster of people on the shore watched her grow smaller as each stroke of the oars laid water between land and boat. For a long time they could still make out the high red color of her dress, spun and dyed on the island, and they thought that soon she would be changing it for other apparel. But her face, which, look at it as often as one might, would always astound one with its strange resemblance to a fruit, she never was to change.

After five hours' rowing, during which time she did not stir, the boat grounded, her clothes hamper was lifted out, and she followed the men across the little town to the railway station. From there she journeyed inland to her destination.

Again she cleaned children, stopped their crying, and washed away dirt. In the mornings she listened to instruction, learning how to cure or ward off illnesses that attack the body of a child, and how to rule over a *crèche*; and it seemed to everyone that she already knew all that was taught her — knew it even better than her teachers.

Her dress was black wool with a wide skirt and tight bodice; a frilled linen cloth was bound around her circular face and tied beneath the chin. The day she left the seminary, a year after her arrival, she was given a long full coat of black serge; she was now a trained deaconess, ready to take charge of a small *crèche*.

Dressed thus, she stood before the seminary in the sun, again her clothes hamper in her hand. Presently her thick black boots, jutting out squarely beneath the hem of the skirt, began to move, taking her straight from the seminary gates to the station. It was as if they could move only straight ahead, and only along paths destined since eternity that they should tread; she followed them, neither looking back to wave, nor craning her neck to look ahead.

At noon the following day those same boots climbed steep city stairs. They never had had stair-mounting taught them — the

island was not so crowded that people had to live up in the air like birds, and the seminary also had sprawled flat in a vast field. The stout shoes clap-clapped cautiously, feeling out each dark musty step, telling the tall woman they carried to cling to the banister and, contrary to city people, to take her own good time.

And with each new story that she gained, she heard clearer and stronger, coming down to her from on high, the voices of children.

Before their parting, the seminary matron had told her of the queer stray world she was about to enter: the world of the city-poor — mean and malodorous — weeping, lying mothers, an absence of fathers, aged children. The matron had talked about the discipline that had to be maintained in the *crèches*, those receptacles into which big towns disgorge their refuse, had counselled a firm hand with quarrelsome women and an iron control over the unruly young. She had dropped words about tact and everyday wisdom, had expressed compassion for the young woman, going out to her first contact with life's deformities. Then the matron had wondered, to herself, if the new sister had taken in a single word of what she'd said. It was true that the light-colored eyes had never left her face while she talked, but in the very stability of their glance there was something disturbing; this young woman, who seemed to live according to different laws than others — laws of animals and plants, perhaps — whose movements were guided by powers outside herself, made one wonder if she understood the ordinary happenings that went to make up people's lives.

When her first day in the *crèche* was over and the new sister sat resting in her room, she remembered the matron's speech, and it seemed even less comprehensible to her, now that she had seen with her own eyes those whom the matron had called by such big sorry words. The room she had stepped into that morning had had daylight choked out of it by smears of soot upon the window panes, and in this fatigued light dreary groups of little men and women had stood about in hostile suspense. She had put down her clothes hamper and pulled off the cotton gloves that were dark with sweat between the fingers, and had walked around, shaking hands. The children saw a woman, pink-faced, tall, and differing vastly from the people who generally came before their eyes. They saw her walk slowly through the room to their various corners, stopping directly

in front of every child, and putting out a large hand in such a way that each time she seemed to be making a gift of that hand. The elder children were eight or nine or ten; from these they shrunk downward like beads on a string to the one and two-year-olds. These small ones she had greeted by passing her quiet flat hand over their hair, but to them also she had said good day, as she would have done to older people, in her sedate slow manner.

At that moment another deaconess had come into the room, had whisked the new sister away, out of earshot of 'those spiteful and inquisitive brats,' and in whispers, punctuated by headshakings, had imparted to her necessary information about the little *crèche*; she had shown her through its three rooms, similar in appearance but differing in odors, then in undisguised relief, had taken her departure.

When the sister came back to the playroom, dressed now in a gleaming white apron, the children set to work making hideous noises so as to let her for once and all understand who were the true rulers. They threw their building bricks onto the floor, banged chairs together, and pinched all those of their number whom they could count on to yell. When the racket had reached its climax, achieved its full proportion, they stood breathless, waiting in voluptuous terror to see what the 'new one' would do.

She walked to the window, opened it and looked out. In front of her, stood great masses of stone hewn into houses; below, in the street, cars roared by, emitting shrieks of misery. The new sister seemed to notice all this as little as she noticed the children's shouting. Her cheeks, like two firm halves of a fruit, lay without a twitching of nerves within the neat basket of the white linen cloth. Her eyes, pale as the water that stood in untroubled calm in the hollows of her rocky island, gazed, without seeing, at the mad spectacle of the city street.

At home, whenever she looked out of the window, she had seen a man leading his cow alongside the green ditch opposite her mother's cottage. He was old — three or four times as old as his aged animal — but that was not the cause of his slow pace; time seemed to stand motionless and almost visible around him, and within its circle he moved at his leisure. When the cow sunk her heavy head to browse, he never tugged at her cord, but slackened it instead; in one hour they had advanced ten yards. Now, as the sister stood at the

high noisy window, she saw in her mind's eye the old man's bleached red-brown shirt, and the swing of the cow's old tail. She was always to see that out of whatever window she gazed.

The children had quieted down. The older ones stood watching her motionless back, and a small boy, trouserless, with short crooked legs, came toward her, crawling silently. When he was beneath her skirt, he sat up and tugged at its hem. She stooped down and, lifting him, rubbed his frozen little bottom, that fitted snugly in her wide hand. Then she tucked him into the crook of her arm, where he settled down, as if he was never to leave it. Soon another followed: a weak-faced, white little fellow; this one she kept by her side, letting him swing to and fro, giggling, in the rich folds of her skirt. One by one they now sidled up to stare at her. At last she had all the boys near her — only the cold-eyed, dour little maids stood rooted in distrust where the room lay darkest. She looked at them, but said nothing; she had not yet uttered a word when she left the room for the kitchen, where she stood breaking bread into milk for their midday meal.

Then suddenly she began to sing. A song about an island — a gray island in green water — flowed down the passage from the kitchen to the playroom. The song had many verses, each laden with more happenings than the last. It was the kind of song that only those who truly understand story telling can invent. Her voice was large, filled with melody, and the children in the other room could easily catch each word.

In the afternoon, when the hours crawled slothfully, irksomely onward, each hour yawning with boredom as it pushed its predecessor out of existence, she poured water into pails, pans and any hollow object that she could find, and began scraping dirt off walls and furniture. Meanwhile the sulky little herd shued about aimlessly, trying bravely to ignore her existence. As she scrubbed, she told the children, or it might have been the chairs, how sad dirt was. What a pity, she said, that one person alone took so long to kill it! She had a story lying on the tip of her tongue, but of course they all knew what stories were — light, gay things that needed prettiness and freshness about. Not that she didn't love cleaning, she went on, as she bent over the long low-legged eating table, crusted with ancient filth; it was wonderful to watch the woodwork blossom out in new fresh patches, until the whole expanse lay clean and happy

beneath the soapsuds. She wanted to keep on and make the whole room white, she said, but her muscles were already swollen and strained, so she'd like to go to her room and sit down a while — that is if they all didn't mind. Then up on her shoulder she swung the small bare-bottomed boy, called Pär, and walked slowly from the room with him riding there.

In her own room, she did not sit down, but remained standing, her arms tight around the little form that pressed against her, and it was plain that she had not come for rest. The boy shifted in her clasp, pushing his face into her neck like some small animal. While she responded to that mute tenderness, her ears were alive as cats in the night, harkening for sounds from the other room. Her instinct told her those sounds would be forthcoming. Brushes rasped in there — water was busy. In the darkness she hid her mouth in the boy's soft weak hair, and let her smiles run close to its damp curly roots.

When later she entered the playroom, she held a candle in her hand, and her eyes were warm from its light. She opened her nostrils to the fragrance of cleanliness, widened her eyes at the sight of neatness; overwhelmed, she looked at the children, then began praising them, saying that she couldn't find words to commend their industriousness and skill. She was sure, she said, that she had never met with such children before. Had they all helped — all worked? A whispered, reluctant 'Yes' ran toward her. All? Well, that was good of them — good and friendly. She'd have to thank all of them — boys and girls. She stood in the middle of the floor, tall and radiant, nodding in all directions. Then she placed the candlestick with the thick white candle on the table, turning out the bulb that hung, glaring in ugliness, on a cord from the ceiling.

'The story I think of telling you is from the sea, like nearly all my stories,' she began. 'Yes, you know, the finest stories come from the sea, and one should always tell them by the light of a candle, so my mother told me. Did you ever hear that?'

She looked out over the upturned faces, so old and chill that morning, now young and golden in the candlelight. There wasn't a dull eye left among all the brown and blue ones watching her; the little mouths stood softly ajar, ready to swallow whatever would be given them.

'There's a lot of adventure in this story,' she said. 'There always

is in tales from the sea. Perhaps the little girls ought to sit closer to me, to feel safe and cosy when I talk about the stormy nights and the great hungry sharks.'

Again she looked out into the still, dimmed room. There was a moment's hesitation, then the first girl, shutting her eyes so that the lashes trembled on her cheeks, made a step forward. The sister held out her large hand. Another brief hesitation — then the little hand delivered itself in relief. She pulled gently, gently. The first boat came into harbor.

Each night at seven the ladder-like stairs leading to the *crèche* were climbed by feet slow with fatigue; the army of mothers arrived. At that hour the door of the *crèche* was left open for this lot of wedded and unwedded misery to trickle through in a dark malodorous stream. This had been the dread hour for the former deaconess, but the new sister, though carefully warned against these grim walkers of the earth by the seminary matron, seemed to see nothing in their faces but that which she saw in every human face, whether adult or child: fright, pain and longing — and death. So every night she walked around, giving away the gift of her hand to each of them, as if she were pleased to have them all safely back again now that another long day had curved their backs and crumpled up their courage.

She actually appeared to enjoy this evening hour. Standing in their midst, little Pär forever on her arm, she would tell them how nice the children had been; they had taught her wonderful new games, she said, which she supposed one played in big fine towns like this, but about which the small maids on her island had never heard. There was richness in her eyes as she told them how the children and she had lived through their day; those fruit-like cheeks of hers stood high and gayly red.

The women who listened to her, small and crooked-heeled, thought that she was dotty, maybe, or that she was trying out some new way of fooling them, like all these 'charity folk.' But when night after night that big clean hand ran toward theirs with undiminished eagerness — that face, simple and bland, gazed at them from its frilly cloth — such thoughts were soon abandoned. Before long they came to regard the new sister in the same way as did her charges — as someone neither child nor grown-up, neither an out-

sider nor yet one of themselves — someone different to others, but so real that they felt they had known her always, as they knew the air they breathed or the green grass.

Now there was no longer a rush in the evenings, an angry snatching up of one's offspring and a dashing off. No, it was pleasant to sit down in the freshly scrubbed room, stretch one's legs comfortably, and chat away to those everwilling ears that believed each word one said. How one could make her laugh! And make her look sad too! But there was one thing one couldn't make her — angry. Not a drop of anger could one squeeze out of her, as if she simply had none in her system. When one came to the part of one's tale where she should have looked indignant, she looked astonished instead. She seemed unable to believe that that vixen of a mistress could spit such venom at one, or that one's boss should treat one as so much dirt beneath his feet. Then immediately afterward she would begin to nod her head, precisely like a child trying not to show that the habits and manners of big people are above it. However furious it had made one to think back on the wrongs that were heaped on one every wretched day, one had to laugh to see her sitting there, nodding her funny round head like that. She was nice somehow! And seeing one laugh, she would immediately begin laughing too, as if it all had been a joke that you two had shared. Nor were the scenes related to her of a Sunday-school order; violence, drunkenness and rape were common subjects — yet never a change in her face. One could have come in and told her that one had murdered someone an hour before, and she would have looked just the same, nodding her head as if to say, Yes, she supposed that such things must happen. Hm. Yes. Just fancy!

She accepted all things as she found them. In whatever disguise human beings presented themselves to her, she welcomed them, never bothering about the outer trappings. As different as weeds in a garden were the children in her *crèche*, and her rôle was only to be present and to shine upon them all. There was Inga, diseased fruit of a mother kicking her legs in a two-penny chorus — Inga forever dancing about with black rings under large sick eyes, skirts high, vulgar as bad breath, giggling about men, telling her friends in whispers what she had seen mother do last night. There was Ragna, with smug face framed between long fair plaits, haughtily owning both father and mother, who was ever disapproving and condemn-

ing; when the sister came carrying the steaming bowl of midday-soup, Ragna's button-nose went high in the air, and the soup which the sister so bravely had concocted out of nothing almost froze from her scornful glance. There was Lars, who could only kick and growl like an animal, and who literally was born in the sewer; when his mother fell dead, like a worn-out carthorse, a well-disposed neighbor placed him in a sugar crate near the garbage pails of the tenement backyard, figuring that when the other hags emptied their slops, they would cram a few morsels down the throat of this yapping young one. At three, husky from constant air and feeding, he broke from his crate, and when the woman returned in the evening, he was sailing orange peels down the gutter; she brought him to the *crèche* to bite and howl.

Lovable or unlovable, they all wanted to live, and thanks to the sister, they did live; she accepted life, and she accepted them. Her patience was endless, or rather she was ignorant of the very nature of impatience or of any form of rebellion. In the same way, she was not so much happy as incapable of unhappiness. When tears wet her face, she knew that she was crying and the thought of stopping those tears was as far from her mind as would have been the thought of stopping rain when a storm broke; when she heard her own laughter ring out, she was pleased and laughed on with it. In telling her stories, which were almost her sole form of expression, she sank completely into the world which she described; she drew no line between reality and dream. Her description of fishes, of water, even of sea nymphs and other legendary dwellers of the sea was so intimate that her listeners never doubted but that she was telling of her own experiences.

It was while relating these stories that she first noticed that two eyes were constantly on her face, eyes that narrowed or widened or were veiled over with the progress of her tale. Like jewels that the goldsmith has pressed deep into a setting, those sparkling eyes were set in a slim dark face; above clustered a mass of hair as shiny as copper beach leaves. Soon a voice that matched the face in its caressing softness became familiar to her. Low-keyed though it was, and though the tongue slurred over the harsh consonants with a silken lisp, it penetrated to her ear above the other children's high shrill voices.

Infinitely beautiful was little Gösta, but that she noticed not at

all; she was aware only that she had begun to look for him as one looks out the window for something delightful — for the sun or a soft summer cloud. At noon-meal and supper he sat facing her from the far end of the table. All through the long, dragging meals she saw his dark eyes light up and glow and repeatedly journey her way. Suddenly he would open his mouth for a smile to escape, sending it to her between the long rows of munching faces, and she had to breathe deeply, so beautiful was that smile, so fully did she accept it.

When this strange new woman had walked into the *crèche* for the first time, opening the door only a little to let herself in, Gösta had taken one good glance at her; after that he had never really looked away again. She was so tall, and she was nearly always standing still, so it seemed to him. It was as if she had a liking for the place on which she stood, and so saw no reason to move, as other people were always moving. She was stable, and he was not used to stable things.

His mother, whose profession he was not old enough to understand, was shaky ground for a boy to build his life on, even with the wealth of love and good-will that Gösta put into the venture. Father he had none — or too many. At night he was left alone, for the tunes of the street called loudly, and Gösta's pleading for his mother to stay was mute, consisting solely of long shy glances. So in a room where all things were dead — dead stove, dead light — he lay clutching a towel, with a knot in it to serve as head — shameful deed for a man of nine. Not till dawn came in by the window and his mother by the door, did he dare let sleep settle on him.

Love, nine years refused and rebuffed, becomes a bewildered little animal. It still wags its tail, still licks, still yaps, but faintly, oh so faintly: with an eye ever open for the kicks. Now one day it sees a human being who is pink from real sun and strong from salt winds — a being it has longed for in dark lonely nights when the room was a playground for horror; she always has time, never is hurried — has more caresses than she can spend in her big quiet hands; instead of speaking many words like other grown-ups, she opens her mouth only to tell stories and sing songs. What must happen then? Why, tremendous things must happen!

Outwardly it would have been hard to tell that here two people had found each other; only by the vaguest of signs do creatures such as these manifest their devotion. In games he used to pick her for

partner, though she was slow where fleetness was required, was awkward of wit where she should have made quick decisions. If anyone was rude, he defended her — if anyone attacked her, he came to her assistance, for she merely sat there, wide-eyed and still, letting the gibes whistle about her ears and stick in her like harmless quills. Perhaps it was this quality of helplessness in her — for she was as lacking in defence as a kitten, or as a stone which may be trod on by all — that had awakened in him the strongest of all human feelings; the desire to protect. When he discovered that though she was big and grown-up, she couldn't even clap her hands and say 'Sh-h' when children made horrid noises to tease and to annoy — couldn't answer cheeky remarks with a cuff on the ear or a slap on the fingers — then, besides affection, he felt wonder — wonder at this new flower, goodness. So great was his wonder, that he wanted to look all day — wanted always to be close to this strange loveliness.

Within the sister, too, deep things were stirring, though just how deep they were she did not guess till the morning Gösta failed to arrive at the *crèche*. That he was not ill she knew, for several of the children had seen him on the street with his mother, and besides, it was a fixed rule that the sister was to be informed in case of illness. Singing her songs while she swept and dusted, she mixed up her verses, and was at once pounced on by Ragna. Again she opened her lips to sing on about mermaids and wave-washed reefs, but though her mouth stood willingly open, no words came. With her face averted, so that they should not read her expression, she asked a second time if it was really Gösta they had seen. Yes, it was Gösta all right, they said. His mother's face was so painted up that she was easy to recognize — there could be no mistake about it.

Suddenly the sister felt her legs aching to move; they couldn't stay still any longer. Out of the door she strode, and down the stairs that she so seldom trod for fear of the great town, spreading away where those stairs ended. The wind tore at her frilled head-band and played with her skirts as she stood in the open doorway. Inside her body was an unaccustomed tumult which other people would have known as anxiety, but to her, stranger to emotions that she was, felt like bodily pain. Something was wrong — something had to be put right, and then, all at once, it *was* right. She saw a boy, thin as a stick, walking up and down the opposite pavement; the sleeves of his narrow jacket were far too short for his arms, and his

wrists were bare, but on his face lay an expression of great contentment. He looked as if he were listening to something; he was completely engrossed in himself. At the sight of that straight little body, the ailment within her was healed; she never remembered how she got up those stairs; she must have flown, as joy makes people fly.

When, soon afterward, Gösta appeared, she did not ask what had kept him on the street, for she was as shy of questions as most people are free with them. It was the other children who found out and asked her whether she hadn't noticed Gösta's newly-soled boots. 'Mother took my shoes to be soled last night,' he said in shy pride, full of happiness at being able to talk of this motherly gesture made by one whom they all knew cared for him less than the gutter-sparrow cares for its last year's young. 'Listen, Sister!' He walked a few steps across the floor. A beautiful, loud screech filled the room — the sort of screech that only brand-new soles can make. As he listened to the sound there was an ecstatic expression on his face, and the sister knew that he had been walking up and down the street to hear that squeaking and to brag a bit in front of passersby. The whole day he kept very still, sitting on a chair, his legs stuck out stiffly before him. 'I'd rather not run around and play a lot, Sister,' he told her. 'I don't want to wear out my new soles too much, you understand.'

She understood. But what she didn't understand was that something new was happening to her. For most women universal love is inconceivable; for her, personal love was an emotion so foreign that at first she couldn't grasp what was taking place, nor account for the disturbance of her whole system. Outwardly she remained the same, only her high round cheeks now were constantly flushed, and her eyes seemed fused with light. Her stories during this time held the children in a kind of trance, and later they could retell them word for word to their mothers, unconsciously reproducing the beautiful simplicity of her speech and the enchantment and naïveté of her voice. Her manner to the children also remained unchanged: no favoritism did she show toward him for whom her heart beat. She belonged to each of them from the moment the morning handclasp united them until the evening leave-taking; whatever they could pluck from her was theirs by right. Yet at the same time, in a special way, she belonged to Gösta alone.

With the end of winter, the sister had served the *crèche* through four seasons. Around a faraway island, lashing green waves took on milder colors and became calmer, but the sister seeing only that city-street that never changed face nor voice, remained unaware of the coming of spring. A letter was to remind her of the passage of time.

The children were at their food when it arrived, seated elbow to elbow along a narrow table running the length of the room, built low so as to match the shortness of their legs. Again it struck her as strange to see the letter lying there so airy and white on the dark, worn table. This was the second letter in her life, and she felt ill at ease at having to do to it those same things that her mother had done to the first: slice it open, pick out the words, and give heed to that which these words, strung together, came to mean. As always, little Pär was on her lap. He owned trousers now, cut from an old apron of hers, and shoes to steady his feet, but his legs still wobbled and gave in the way wax melts. He had grown to her arm like a white little growth to a branch; at the mere suggestion that he should sit by himself or try to walk, something that she could not bear to see happened to his face, and he was allowed to remain in his accustomed corner.

The meal had been snail-paced as always, and the arrival of the letter failed to interrupt its quiet course; where nervous curiosity is absent, a letter, or anything else, may be dealt with in due time. She put a spoonful of oatmeal in Pär's mouth, then bent down to feed the two smallest girls, who sat on either side of her chair. Next she had to put an end to various quarrels that were in progress. When she looked down at Pär, the clot of slippery oatmeal had slid down the slope of his chin onto his bib; staring into infinity, he leaned against her, his wet little mouth open in soft fatigue. As at every meal, she scooped the clot from the napkin, slipped it back into his mouth, making his lips close, his throat swallow. By that time the two little girls were bespattered with milk and porridge, fresh quarrels had broken loose. When she again could attend to Pär, he was staring into vacancy once more, the new clot reposing peacefully on his bib. Time drags; there is length to each minute; the very second is long.

'... your twelve months in the *crèche* must have seemed long to you ... we would be pleased to make a change ... the reports

about your work have been excellent . . . entitle you to the position of head of the new *crèche* in P . . . conditions there *entirely different* . . . working class on higher level . . . surroundings healthy, pleasant. . .'

She put down her letter, and looked to see every face turned toward her. It was Ragna who broke the silence.

'What did it say, Sister?' came her firm voice.

The sister gave a start, as always when the whip of Ragna's voice cracked in the air; out of habit, her glance hastened to Gösta's end of the table, but then, remembering the contents of the letter, she dared not look up to drink from the sweetness of those doe-brown eyes. She put out a finger that was stiff with enmity against the letter and pushed it away from her.

'What does it say?' she repeated, pushing the letter still further away. 'Why, nothing, Ragna. Nothing, dear children. Only I have been twelve months with you here, and now they say that I may leave next month. I shall have another *crèche* — in another town.'

Suddenly thirty pairs of eyes began to flutter, running here and there like animals in fright, thirty spoons sank through the slush of the porridge bowls and rattled as they touched the bottom. They sat staring at each other, the sister and the children, and eyes became lakes that were too full and soon ran over. While she screened her face in Pär's soft hair, breathing so hard that she ruffled the down upon his temples, she felt Gösta's arms around her neck, and his cheek pressing against hers. As if this, the first caress given her in the *crèche*, acted as a signal, sobs burst forth along the table. She rose, bewildered, and in that instant the children clustered around her, scared and helpless; she stood amongst them, sobbing as loudly as they.

Then Ragna, her button-nose red from crying, called out: 'Sister!' — called out the word angrily and in her superior manner, but with something in her voice so new, so lovely, that the sister had to sob the harder. After that they all began to call to her, and though they only said her name, it sounded like a request, an entreaty. She squatted on the floor, surrounded by all those streaming faces, and her eyes were shy when she beheld the love that without her knowledge had sprung up for her in this poor soil and blossomed into so unbelievably beautiful a flower.

She tried to rise. She could not. There was not a movement in

her body; she was as firmly anchored here as was her island in its sea, and the children were the waves that would lap around her forever. When the knowledge that she was meant to stay had taken hold of her, she began to smile, though wholly unconsciously, and thus she conveyed the news to the children; at once they too started smiling, and they climbed onto her, some hanging about her neck, some sprawling across her lap, others touching her cheeks. Soon they were laughing amongst themselves, laughing and hopping about, pulling each other's hair, rolling two and two upon the floor — and in this laughter and gaiety which they all shared, the children had the assurance that she would never leave them. A promise, deep and unbreakable, had been sealed.

It happens often in life that one takes a step, seemingly of free will, only to discover that the direction of that step had been preordained since time immemorial. The moment the sister had pledged her word to remain, pledged it in this irrevocable manner, events took place contrary to any she could have expected.

It was a spring evening and the light was failing when the door of the *crèche* was torn open and a voice, bodiless as a ghost's, was wafted into the room. 'Sister! Sister!' it called. The sister turned to the children and let them take from her face all the assurance that they needed, for the voice calling to her could have terrified both child and adult. Slowly, each unhurried step meant as a further comfort for them, she left the room, closing the door in a calm every-day manner, as if no eerie voice were awaiting her on the other side.

The moment that the door clicked, hands closed themselves around her wrists. In the half-darkness she could barely see the face of the other woman, and when she bent down, the countenance that she made out was so dissolved by terror as to be unrecognizable; only the thick line of the painted mouth told her that it was Gösta's mother. That desperate red mouth drew nearer and nearer, and from it words without sense or order came tumbling forth. 'Killed him — couldn't stop myself — killed him!' The voice was ugly with fright, but there was a soft lisp on the consonants that was familiar to the sister.

'Killed who?' she asked, precisely as if she had been asking so simple a question as: 'Seen who?' or 'Met who?'

But for answer the other woman shouted out a name in a voice that was crazed with hatred.

'Karlson!' she shrieked. 'Karlson, for whom I've slaved and given up my earnings. All that I earned each night I gave Karlson — I never kept a penny for myself. I never bought Gösta a sweet. Night after night I went out on the streets so that Karlson would have money to get drunk ...'

'Why did you kill Karlson?' asked the sister, in the same way that a child might have asked it, and like a child's question, it was sensible and straight to the point.

'Why?' The woman was going to laugh, but instead burst into terrible weeping. 'I loved Karlson — that's why. I loved Karlson, I tell you, and last night he sneaked off on me — sneaked off with another. You understand, don't you, that I was insane about Karlson. ...'

Suddenly her body fell away in the darkness, and the sister came forward, and caught it as it fell — caught all: the tortured spirit, the miserable years, the agony of the crime — caught it and laid it to her breast. On a wooden bench they sank down, sank as one person, the small woman confessing, confiding, entreating, all in, repeating, 'Sister. Oh, Sister' in the same way that the children said it. At last she gave a violent shudder, as if she were being torn by the devil inside her, and then she was quite still. She looked up at the sister with a new face, as if all that was sordid had been melted away in that embrace. Lifting a finger, she touched the sister's cheek.

But now there were steps in the passage, and the woman, springing up scuttled away like a rat behind a cupboard. Those steps brought nothing dreadful: Gösta it was, coming courageously to find out what had happened to the sister. The sight of him seemed to reawaken in the woman all the fear that the sister momentarily had calmed; for an instant she stood motionless, then leapt forward to seize him by the sleeve; dragging Gösta along, she flung herself through the door and down the steep stair case.

Now it was quite dark in the passage. The sister stood stiff as a figure of wood, her skirts falling in hard folds to the floor. She was not thinking of anything — was simply conscious of the terrible tumult in her body. A hitherto unknown emotion had been born within her, and only gradually she realized what that emotion was: it was the desire to possess. She who in her whole life never had

desired, now desired something; she who had never owned nor wished to own, was torn with the will to take something for herself. The boy she wanted — the boy with the great brown eyes, the soft, soft lisp — and suddenly, unexpectedly had come the chance of winning him for her own.

After that everything happened with hurricane speed. The sister's black boots seemed to act for themselves, carrying her down the stairs and through the streets, hurrying her along strange alleyways and mews, to the dark hole that had been Gösta's home. The place was empty, only a small cluster of people stared avidly through the window at the blood-soiled floor boards, evaluating with shrewd eyes the bedding and the pots and pans. When she asked after the occupants, she had fifty answers buzzing about her ears, stinging her. The girl had been arrested, they told her — and had been taken the moment she came running back here like the fool she was. Now she was locked up, and the boy too was gone. Gone! Gone! each passerby seemed to shout to the sister as she hurried down the endless streets separating her from the prison. At last she stood before the gates that would not open.

All around her was night. One by one the stars came out, each star marvellous as one of Gösta's eyes. She gave the bars a violent shake, expecting them to crumble; they remained immovable. Like furious water hurling itself upon the cliffs, she flung her huge body at the gates, then once more seized the bars in her two hands. Had they been trees, she might have crushed them; they were prison bars — she could as well have grappled with the night.

A series of pilgrimages now began between the *crèche* and the prison. In the morning before her work, the sister would go out and hasten hopefully toward those gray unpassable gates, only to return defeated, her mission unaccomplished; never did she set eyes on Gösta nor discover where he was being kept. During these days it was as if she had lost the power of speech, or else had taken a vow of silence; her lips lay glued together, and became colorless, as lips of the sick. The children, comprehending, made no demands on her, but whispered her old stories over and over to each other. How could they ask for a tale or a song from someone who had so much sorrow?

Two weeks the tempest lasted. The sister, like a blade of grass, was lashed by the wind, one moment flattened to the ground, the

next raised up by hope, then soon flung down again. In her room at night she would remain standing — up by the wall perhaps, or in a corner — standing there for any length of time. A plaintive sound, which was not a sob, nor a sigh, escaped her closed lips; it was like the whine of an animal, its head lifted to the night in sorrow.

Then, as suddenly as the storm had started, it subsided. Gösta was irrevocably lost. He had been sent, she was informed, to the state prison orphanage; only influence and money — things which she did not possess — would set him free. He was to be taught a trade and not before he was a man would he be allowed to go into the world.

As this sorrow came to live with her, finding its permanent home within her being, calm came also. Somehow she knew that this was right — that she wasn't made for personal love. Had Gösta become hers, the strange seed of her affection for him would have sprung into flower, but such a flower was not meant to be. Yet, even if her knowledge of it was brief, she had felt love, and close upon love had come its inseparable companion, grief. Now she knew with certainty that it was to experience these two that she had left her island and gone out into the world.

Then early one morning she walked into the playroom of the *crèche* and saw it lying still, blessed by hot summer sunshine. Seating herself full in the sunlight, she closed her eyes and laid one hand on the other in her lap. The morning progressed and the sun grew stronger; butter-yellow it poured down on the woman who sat so still, giving up her whole body to its healing powers. Her hands became hot; she opened her fingers to let the air touch her palms. From her hands warmth crept up her arms, spread over her shoulders, then washed down her big body, her thighs, her knees. For hours she did not stir; knowingly or unknowingly she aided nature to heal her, urged her blood to answer the call of the sun. Her face reddened, little beads of moisture glazed the pink cheeks. She took a deep breath, opened her eyes and for a moment looked straight into the sun. From her strong full throat a song burst forth — a magnificent song about waves, about green water.

Thus she was singing when the children found her.

MARCHING ORDERS

By I. V. MORRIS

(From *New Stories*)

NICOLAS ZAPHIRO, *né* Zaphiropoulos, pushed away the plate of fried potatoes with which he usually finished off his breakfast, and sank back in his armchair. He had no appetite this morning, and he had had no appetite yesterday either, nor the whole week before. It was a bad sign for a man to have no appetite for breakfast. Not that he was ill — he had never felt healthier in his life — but he simply had lost his taste for food — and for other things.

For instance, his wife and he had visited some friends last night, Greeks like themselves, and they had had Greek wine. Now, as a rule there was nothing Zaphiro so relished as a glass, or even several glasses, of good Greek wine, but on this occasion he had raised it to his lips and put it down untasted; when they urged him to drink, he had complied with their wishes so as not to hurt their feelings, and the liquid had tasted bitter and unfermented as it ran down his throat. It was the same with his other pleasures, too — with the pleasures of carnal love, and even of making a good trade, which he had once thought the greatest joy of all. As Nicolas Zaphiro sat there, puffing a cigarette and staring at his overlaid breakfast table, it came to him with a shock that it was a long time since he had really enjoyed life.

He was a tailor by profession, and a very good one; he was said to be one of the best in Paris. Thirty years before, this Nicolas Zaphiro had had a dream. In that dream there had been many people: there had been men, keen and eager as himself, moving about with rolls of fine materials in their hands, while others, seated at low tables, cut the cloth; there had been still others perched high on stools, adding up in black ledgers rows of figures which represented money. There had also been a woman in his dream: a plump, appetising woman, replete with curves and bangles; there had been a great foreign city; an apartment with soft beds, soft sofas; an endless row of dishes, sizzling in luscious oils.

And now that dream was realized. He, once an illiterate urchin in the back streets of Salonika, employed more than a dozen workmen in his expensive Paris shop, while the gold bracelets on his wife's arms had accumulated till she had to wear them above the elbows; he had gained security, wealth, and a high measure of recognition in his chosen trade. Indeed, he had achieved more than he set out to do, and the trouble was that there was nothing left to achieve. Of course he might have increased his business — might eventually have doubled or tripled his capital — but this lay outside the scope of his dream; he was not interested in it. If he still worked ten hours daily in the shop, it was through force of habit, and with the knowledge that his assistants could have managed almost as well without him. Perhaps, had Zaphiro been asked, he would have found it as difficult to say why he worked as to say what he still expected out of life.

So there he was on the morning in question, sitting by his breakfast table, when there came the soft sound of the morning post falling through the letter slot. Crushing out his cigarette, he rose and made his way into the corridor, where a number of envelopes lay scattered near the outer door of his apartment. He stooped to pick them up, grunting as he did so, for with all his other possessions, he had come into a paunch. Just then the bedroom door opened, and he caught sight of his wife in her flannel nightgown, standing in the entrance; probably the thud of the letters on the carpet had awakened her.

'Anything of interest?' she asked, yawning. Even with each other they spoke French, which had become far more their language than their native Greek.

'No, all business things,' he answered.

But then he saw one which was not business — a personal letter, though in an unknown handwriting. He was about to mention it, and for some reason decided not to.

His wife asked: 'Were you going to say something?'

'No, nothing. What made you think so?'

Later, as he was going downstairs in the lift, he took out the letter and looked at it again. No, he certainly did not know the writing. Then he split it open, read 'Dear Zaphiro,' and looked down at the foot of the page for the signature. 'A. Lopez.'

This Lopez was a client of Zaphiro's, an Argentine who had spent

most of his life in Paris. He had begun coming to the Greek tailor for his clothes three years before, and since then had ordered a great many suits — at least two dozen — though as yet he had never paid a penny on account. About a year before, Zaphiro, grown worried, began to hint that a small payment would be welcome, but Lopez had put him off, both through his airy promises to discharge the bill, and because of the intimate, almost affectionate, manner he had adopted towards Zaphiro from the start. It flattered the little Greek's vanity to be treated as an equal by a gentleman of the world; though it was true that he had never seen Lopez outside his shop, he could, when he spoke to him, feel himself part of the gay, luxurious life at which the other was always hinting in his conversation.

By the time Zaphiro unlocked the door of his tailor shop, which occupied the ground floor of the same premises, he had read through Lopez' letter and digested its contents. In a few lines, the Argentine told his creditor that he was about to leave the country, returning to South America, and that if Zaphiro dropped in to see him at his hotel, he was sure they could come to a 'friendly understanding' about the bill. Zaphiro, as he stuffed the letter into his pocket, wondered why he did not feel more upset. He knew just how much was to be expected from these 'friendly understandings,' and a year before he would have cursed himself for a fool for allowing anyone such large credit. As it was, he simply wasn't interested — but surely it was another bad sign for a man not to be interested in his own business!

He even would have put off the visit to another day had an errand not taken him near the hotel that same morning; finding himself unexpectedly in a nearby street, he remembered Lopez' letter and on the spur of the moment decided to call. It was then a little after eleven.

Zaphiro had to wait some moments in the hotel lobby while the operator rang the Argentine's apartment. Just when he was despairing of getting a reply, was about to tell the girl not to trouble, he heard the other receiver being lifted off the hook, and a sleepy voice asked what he wanted.

'I came about your letter.'

'Letter? Ah yes!' There was a pause; then Lopez asked him to come up. 'I'll see you in a moment.'

Zaphiro followed a uniformed boy into the lift, and later through the upstairs corridors of the hotel; they walked a long way, the thick carpet on which they trod drowning the sound of their footsteps. They passed a maid, who squeezed against the wall to make room for them, bowing respectfully to Zaphiro, looking at him with servile eyes.

At length the boy stopped before a glass-partitioned door.

'This is the suite, sir,' he said, and knocked. Zaphiro gave him a small tip.

He had to wait about a minute before Lopez came to let him in. The South American was dressed in a pair of pale-blue pyjamas with a large monogram on one breast pocket; over these hung loosely an orange dressing-gown of heavy silk. He was not yet shaved, but he had pomaded his hair, which was brushed back from his thin pale forehead.

'Please forgive me,' said the tailor. 'I didn't know — you said —'

'It's quite all right.' The other cut short his apologies. 'Come in.'

He opened the door to a large sitting-room, with many pieces of furniture about, etchings on the wall, and a large table at one end, on which were arrayed a number of China figures; it looked much more like a room in a private house than a hotel parlour.

'Ah, you have it very nice here,' said Zaphiro, glancing about.

'Not bad. Sit down. Do you smoke?'

'Thank you.' He accepted from an alabaster box a cigarette on which Lopez had had printed his initials. 'That's nice,' he said. 'I've never seen that before.'

Lopez did not answer him, but began at once to talk about the object of the visit; he seemed in a hurry to get the conversation over with.

'Yes, as I wrote you, it's impossible for me to pay just now. I've explained to you already that we can't get money out of our country, at least not very much. Still, you needn't worry; it's a temporary state — I mean to pay you.'

'I haven't said anything,' said Zaphiro. 'It's you who wrote.'

'I know, I know. Well, what's to be done? I don't want you to suffer, and at the same time I can't do the impossible. Now what I want to suggest is this: I'll give you something I own and which I

can't take away. When I come back, I'll give you the money; it will be a sort of security.'

'I see. And what did you think of giving me?'

'I don't know — we'll find something suitable. I was thinking perhaps my car. I have a Citroën — last year's model.'

'And I, too,' said Zaphiro.

'Oh! That's unfortunate. Well, what else can I suggest? Perhaps my aeroplane.'

'An aeroplane! What should I be doing with an aeroplane?'

'You could learn to fly — as I did. It's most amusing; I go up almost every afternoon.'

Zaphiro began to laugh at the absurdity of the suggestion.

'But I'm afraid I was born to be a tailor — not an aviator.'

Suddenly he had the queerest sensation: he felt without the shadow of a doubt that all this had happened to him somewhere before — that he had once already pronounced that last phrase, in reply to somebody's statement that he went up in the air each afternoon. Was it recently or long ago? He was not sure. It was as if he were at that moment dreaming, but this time *consciously* dreaming, an old dream which always eluded his memory in day-time hours. And the most uncanny thing of all, but a thing of which he was absolutely sure, was that this dream had a direct bearing on his lethargy, on his boredom, in fact on his whole changed state of being. It came like a flash of intuition, but next moment all was dark again.

Lopez was talking.

'You're old-fashioned, my dear Zaphiro! What would have happened to aviation if we'd all of us thought like that? Do you think I believed that I was "born to be an aviator?" But you catch on to it — it's like learning a new language. Soon you feel that you've known it always.'

He stood there with his bright dressing-gown falling from his slender shoulders, his hair glistening in the morning sunlight. He was a representative of another world, apart from the world of tailors, of Greek immigrants, of *petits bourgeois*. Zaphiro, from his limitless distance, smiled self-consciously.

'I'm a busy man, Mr. Lopez. I haven't the leisure to fly about in aeroplanes all day.'

'Oh, it isn't a question of all day. An hour in the evening is all

you need, and it's April — remember that the evenings are getting longer. I assure you that it's fascinating — but don't think that I'm trying to argue you into it.'

'It's a fantastic idea,' said Zaphiro — 'quite fantastic.'

He wanted to say something else, to drop this subject of the aeroplane, which had come to its logical conclusion, and to his surprise, he found himself continuing it instead.

'But what was your suggestion — that I actually buy the aeroplane? Or keep it as a security? To do that would be very complicated, I think.'

'Yes, you'd better buy it; then if you decide that you don't want it, you can sell it later. Of course the amount of your bill would be considered already paid.'

Zaphiro was astonished at the way the other, all without pressing the matter, seemed to consider the deal as good as finished; he spoke as if only the details were still to be arranged, and despite himself, Zaphiro was swept along.

'Then there wouldn't be much more to pay,' he observed, his old bargaining instinct coming to the fore.

'No, not much. We'll fix on a fair price for the aeroplane — there's a regular tariff, as for secondhand cars — and the difference you can pay me when you please.'

'I quite understand. Now if I oblige you, I think that you should let me have it cheap — considering the circumstances.'

'We won't argue about the price.'

Just then a door leading to a bedroom flew open, and to Zaphiro's embarrassment a young woman in a light green dressing-gown came into the room; he noticed immediately two things about her: her beauty and the abnormal pallor of her face.

'What do you want?' asked Lopez irritably. 'I'm very busy.'

'Can't you choose some other moment for your business? You may be an Argentine, Lopez, but I beg of you, behave as if you had some manners!'

'We are having a most important conversation. We are reaching a deal about my aeroplane.'

'Oh, is that it? If you're trying to get rid of that old kite, no wonder that you have to do a lot of arguing. The machine's not fit to taxi across the field in! I presume you are a flyer?' she asked, turning to Zaphiro and smiling at him in a way to which he was not accustomed in his clients.

'No,' he answered, 'but Mr. Lopez is trying to turn me into one.'

'Zaphiro makes my clothes,' explained Lopez. 'He's the best tailor in the city. Don't you think he'd make a splendid aviator?'

'Why yes, of course,' said the South American's mistress, glancing at Zaphiro again, and laughing. 'The only trouble is his weight; he'd better try to reduce, or he'll never manage a decent take-off.'

It struck Zaphiro that her manner towards him changed the moment that she learned that he was not an aviator; previously, no doubt, she had taken him to be a gentleman.

'Does Madame fly also?' asked the Greek, when she had left the room.

'Yes, she is an excellent aviatrix. In fact, I met her at the airport.'

'Which airport do you use?'

'Orly. It's the most convenient — only fifteen kilometres' drive from the Concorde. You ought to do it in your Citroën in twenty minutes. By the way, how about going up with me for a trial spin this afternoon? You will see how you like it.'

'Oh — well, thank you very much. You mean that you would take me up?'

'Why yes. You needn't be frightened — I'm an authorized pilot; I take friends up all the time.'

'No, no — I'm not frightened, though I've never been up before. I was just figuring out if I could manage it today. If you'd really be so kind, I should like it very much.'

'All right.'

As soon as Zaphiro left Lopez' apartment, he began to blame himself for the outcome of the interview. Looking at matters logically, he had to admit that he'd acted like a woefully bad business man; once he had consented to so much as discuss Lopez' proposition, he had said good-bye to all hope of recovering the cash. Not that he meant to buy that aeroplane! Certainly not! Still, he did not obligate himself in any way by allowing the Argentine to take him up; it would be rather amusing, and without doubt an experience.

It was past noon when he returned to the tailor shop, and the clerks and the cutters had all gone out for lunch. Zaphiro went upstairs, and on opening the door of his flat, his nostrils were assailed by the rich smell of goulash; the maid came hurrying by, a huge platter of stuffed egg plants on her arm.

'You're ten minutes late. They've begun to eat.'

Zaphiro went at once into the dining-room, to find his wife, his mother-in-law and the three children seated before high-stacked plates. His wife greeted him with a raised fork.

'We couldn't wait. We were hungry.'

He seated himself in his usual chair and waited for the maid to serve him; but when, having handed about the vegetables, she brought him in his meat, he found that all desire for food had fled. His wife watched him angrily as he picked out a few small morsels.

'Why don't you eat anything? Isn't it what you like?'

'Yes — I'm just not hungry.'

He wondered how he should break the news that he was to go flying that afternoon. He thought of saying it quite casually, or else of asking them to guess what he meant to do, and then surprising them, but decided against both alternatives. He was sure that his wife would forbid him, and he feared a scene, for suddenly he knew definitely that he was going up; nothing would prevent him. He did not know why, but he had begun to think of it as intensely important that he make the trial flight that afternoon with Lopez. After consideration he decided to say nothing; it was the safest plan.

The meal dragged to its end, Zaphiro sitting moodily at his end of the table without once talking. The memory of his brief encounter with Lopez served as a barrier behind which he hid himself from his family; he felt himself strangely foreign to these greasy, dark-skinned children, to this squat wife of his with her negroid hair and mountainous bosoms which welled up over her loose corsets. Catching sight of himself in the oval wall mirror, he noted with satisfaction his pale skin, his thick-set but handsome face, his square shoulders, over which the pepper and salt suit, cut with his own hands, lay creaselessly; and for almost the first time there stirred within him a feeling of irritation at this family of Greeks which had sprung up around him, claiming him as their own. If it weren't for them — and for his name — not a soul would have taken him for anything but a Frenchman.

He escaped from the flat as soon as possible and went downstairs, taking with him a thick sweater and a motoring cap, which he deemed suitable garments for his flight. It was ten minutes past two by the clock in the tailor shop, and one of the clerks was just coming in through the street door, returning tardily from lunch; he jumped

with terror on catching sight of the boss, for as a rule Zaphiro did not return to the shop till three, taking a nap, Oriental fashion, after lunch. To the man's surprise, he escaped without a reprimand or a glance of enquiry. Zaphiro had absent-mindedly lit a cigarette and was striding up and down the little room. Soon afterwards he went into the office where the books were kept, presumably to study Lopez' account, but actually to be alone. He sat at the table for some minutes with the unopened ledger before him.

He was not in the least frightened, or even excited, at the thought of the approaching adventure, but he had the most peculiar feeling about it, the like of which he had had only two or three times in his life before. He remembered distinctly the first of these occasions. He had been a small boy of twelve, in Greece. It was Christmas. Someone, he forgot whom, had sent his mother a roll of cloth to make a dress for herself, and perhaps other garments for the children. He could still see it lying in a corner of the crowded living room, could to this day feel the satiny texture of the cloth. By what strange coincidence had he that very Christmas received a large pair of 'cutting-out' scissors? Suddenly he is walking towards the roll of cloth, the scissors in his outstretched hand. Nearer and nearer he comes, and at each step he feels strong within him that same curious, inexplicable sensation which is to overwhelm him again almost forty years later on. How is he to describe it? An awareness of fatality — of the inevitable about to be realized — of the future rolled into the present? He knows that he must cut the cloth — that therein lies his destiny, lies self-realization, lies beauty. And today in the same way, or almost the same way, he knows that he must fly through the clouds with Lopez. Consciously, he is going towards his fate. The present and the past are made one by the recurrence of an emotion long since forgotten; he is a child; life like a pattern, woven and unchangeable, lies before him, and he must *live* that pattern.

Returning to the other room, he was surprised to see Lopez' Citroën parked outside; the Argentine was waiting for him, smoking a cigar.

'I thought you said three o'clock,' Zaphiro apologized. 'I didn't want to keep you waiting.'

'It is three, Zaphiro — ten past, to be exact. But don't worry; I've only this moment arrived.'

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'It is three, Zaphiro — ten past, to be exact. But don't worry; I've only this moment arrived.'

So that meant that he had been sitting in the little alcove almost an hour!

He went to get his sweater and motoring cap, and to tell the clerks that he would not be back that day. Lopez eyed the checked headgear askance on his return.

'That won't do you any good,' he said. 'I'll lend you a regular aviator's helmet when we get to the flying field.'

They drove through the southern suburbs of Paris and out along the Fontainebleau road. Neither of them spoke more than a few words till they were almost at the aerodrome.

'Is that it?' asked Zaphiro, sitting up in his seat, as he caught sight of a row of hangars to the left; at the same time he noticed two aeroplanes circling in the sky.

'Yes, that's Orly,' said Lopez, swinging his car in through the open gates. A uniformed attendant took off his cap and bowed.

Having alighted from the car, Zaphiro accompanied the Argentine down a cinder path into a newly constructed white stone building, above the portico of which he read the words: 'Cercle Roland Garros.'

'This is a club,' explained Lopez. 'You have to be elected a member, though of course you may fly at Orly even if you do not belong. But I'll arrange it for you. You'll find it useful to join.'

If — *if* I decide to fly! thought Zaphiro, protesting inwardly at the other's presumption. To hear him talk, one would suppose that the whole matter had been settled!

In the large reading room, which still smelt of paint and varnish, several members, both men and women, sat about conversing or perusing magazines. They nearly all nodded to Lopez, and two men came up to speak to him. Zaphiro was introduced, and just as that morning, when Lopez' mistress had addressed him, before she knew he was a tailor, he was impressed and delighted by their respectful manner towards him. Lopez left him to get into his flying togs, so for several moments he stood speaking with these gentlemen, who owned their own aeroplanes and flew, like Lopez, as a hobby.

When Lopez came back, they left the building, following the cinder path towards one of the hangars. It was raining a thin drizzle and the visibility was bad, but Lopez replied with a laugh to Zaphiro's question as to whether it was not a poorish flying day.

'You're not backing out now, are you?'

'No, of course not. What an idea!'

In front of the hangar, two mechanics were engaged in turning over the propeller of an open two-seater monoplane.

'It's still cold,' explained Lopez. 'It takes some moments to get the engine started.'

Just as they came up to the 'plane, the propeller started with a whirr, blowing a strong current of air in their direction, which tore off Zaphiro's cap and sent it scurrying across the field. Lopez laughed loudly at the other's discomfiture.

'Here, put this on,' he said, tossing him a helmet with goggles attached, which he drew from the pocket of his leather jacket.

A moment later they had stepped into the aeroplane, and the mechanic was showing Zaphiro how to fasten the safety straps which attach one to the seat. Lopez accelerated the motor; they began slowly, then more rapidly, to taxi across the field; imperceptibly they left the ground, which moved away from them, to leave them suspended fearsomely in space.

It was a novel experience for Zaphiro. Yet it was not so very novel either. Had he read so extensively about flying and the accompanying sensations that he seemed to have felt them all before, or was it possible that he had dreamed about this also, so that when Lopez in the forward cockpit turned about to shout something at him, at the same time pointing downwards to the toy palaces of Versailles, the gesture merely repeated that of some dream figure in the past? But if this was reality and the other experience a dream, it was strange that the dream, tenuous and broken though it remained in his memory, had a vividness that the present moment lacked. Everything now was as hazy and unreal as if the flight were being made upon a magic carpet. They passed through a heavy bank of mist, and for some moments not even the tips of the wings or the back of his companion's neck were visible to Zaphiro from where he sat; it seemed to him that he was flying into a new world, that he had left upon the old all consciousness of his former life; he could feel the damp air against his cheeks, stinging his eyes so that he had to close the lids, and he relished these sensations, as a man who never in his life has suffered might hold out his arms to pain. When they came out of the mist, he felt that he had been bathed clean, and his skin, when he touched it, seemed to him soft and

strange. After an experience like this, flashed through his mind, a man can never be the same again. They passed over Versailles and over St. Germain, just perceptible through the shreds of mist which they had left below them, and then Lopez doubled the plane about and bore towards Orly. Arrived above the flying field, he began to circle downwards, the plane tipping sideways, so that the bodies of the two men lay almost horizontal to the ground. Zaphiro could feel the air rushing at his head, while the ground below revolved rapidly, as on a pivot, at the same time rising up to meet him.

He was not scared, not for a moment, although he did not realize that this was quite the safest method of losing altitude. Seeing Lopez turn about, he waved his hand at him and smiled. He wanted to go on forever, and it was with a disappointed feeling that he perceived they were about to land. When the aeroplane skimmed low across the field, and finally, a land vehicle again, bumped its way awkwardly towards the hangars, Zaphiro relaxed with a sigh of utter satisfaction. So that was it! Yes, he had known that it would be like that—he had known it always. He was going to buy Lopez' aeroplane and learn to fly.

Every afternoon at five Zaphiro had a lesson at the aerodrome. He did not use his own machine to make these flights, but sat in the instruction plane, equipped with dual control. The Farman stood under canvas in a corner of one of the hangars, and often Zaphiro would have the cover stripped off to have a good look at his possession. He had only been up in it that once, but already he had a real affection for this plane, believing without reason that it was handsomer and more graceful than its sisters. He now took it quite for granted that he was to be an aviator, and he deemed it a bit of extraordinary luck that he had fallen on such a splendid little plane. He, who had never been possessive by nature, found himself quite blown up with pride when it came to the Farman monoplane. He did not like to think of its having belonged to someone else, and on one occasion when the mechanics moved it to the other end of the hangar without his authorization, he was furious, and to their surprise, quite lost his temper.

But in many other ways his character had changed, at least it seemed so to his wife and family. It was not so much that he treated them casually of late, or rather ignored their existence, as the fact that his attitude towards everything, small and large, had become

practically reversed. If it was months since he had seemed entirely himself, the change in him lately was both more general and more pronounced. His ennui and occasional disgust with his family, which he took no pains to hide, extended gradually to the whole circle of his former acquaintances, so that in the end he insulted his childhood friend, Diamantopoulos, by not showing up at his birthday party. And he did not care. When Diamantopoulos came to see him next day, Zaphiro received him in such an offhand manner that it only made matters worse; as his old friend said to Zaphiro's wife afterwards, 'he seemed so absent-minded — as if the whole matter didn't concern him at all.'

Zaphiro's wife thought that he had a mistress, and believed that she even knew the name of the lady in question. Naturally she did not like the thought that the sharer of her bed for twenty years had been unfaithful to her, but she was a clever woman and would have put up with that, if only he had not grown so strange and callous. What made matters worse was that while he never denied her accusation, he refused to discuss the matter with her, simply relapsing into a dogged silence. As he no longer made any advances to her, she never for a moment doubted his unfaithfulness, and she would have been greatly surprised if told that her rival had wings instead of legs, and a smooth aluminum body with the tricolour painted on it in concentric circles. His daily relations with his new love were as yet of a platonic nature, but soon the day would come when physical intimacy could commence. He would rather have died than introduce this mistress to his wife, or indeed tell her of the illicit world to which she belonged, and where he visited her surreptitiously after office hours.

About four Zaphiro used to leave his shop, call for his Citroën at the garage, and take the road for Orly. He was always overcome by an intense, almost painful excitement, as the hour approached, but once he was in the car and on the way, it vanished completely; he was already then in the new world, and as oblivious of the old as if it did not exist. He never thought of his family, of his business, of anything to do with his ordinary existence; he did not deny these things, nor was he ashamed of them, but they seemed so far away that he could hardly remember, for instance, the names of his three children, or the colour of a suit which a customer had ordered that same morning.

He would arrive at the aerodrome half an hour before his lesson. This was at first accidental, for he was terrified of annoying his instructor by coming late; afterwards it became purposeful, when he found that the spare moments could be passed delightfully in the lounge of the 'Cercle Roland Garros.' He had not made any friends, but possessed innumerable acquaintances who greeted him, and sometimes asked him to have a drink. It was known that Zaphiro was a tailor, but flying people are not snobbish, and his occupation did not alter the cordiality of their feelings towards him; only Zaphiro himself was shocked on seeing the word 'tailor' printed after his name on the posted list of new candidates for election to the club.

At five promptly, Zaphiro stepped into the cockpit of the instruction plane, though he often had to wait some moments for the arrival of his mentor, who used to have a drink at the bar between flights. At length the man could be seen coming down the cinder path, perhaps still fastening the buckle of his helmet, and taking his good time about it; Zaphiro could hardly wait to get started, nor control his annoyance at this daily delay, which cut ten minutes off his half-hour. The instructor climbed languidly into his seat, threw away his cigarette, and with hardly a word to his passenger, started off the plane. Zaphiro disliked this man who, of all the people he had met at the aerodrome, seemed alone to look down on him. Yet on the instructor's own statement his pupil had made astonishingly rapid progress. Did he realize that Zaphiro was a tailor and a Greek, and was that the reason for his attitude? Be that as it may, he succeeded in thoroughly riling Zaphiro, who sought the opportunity to snub him in turn when he met him later in the clubhouse.

After the flight, it was pleasant to come back into the heated room, which at that hour of the day was usually well filled with people. There would be a game or two of bridge going on, and sometimes a table of poker, at which Zaphiro used to take a hand. Every now and then the door would open to admit new people who had just descended from their planes; Zaphiro, seated at the card table or standing at the bar, would call out to one or the other to ask how the flight had gone. He had even met the stunt flyers, Detroyat and Doret, both of whom flew frequently at Orly, and he used to nod to them quite intimately; he could hardly believe that a month before he had not known a single one of all these people.

He always stayed until quite late and, as they served a light supper in the club, it happened frequently that he telephoned his wife that he could not be home for dinner. Standing in the dimly lit telephone booth, while the receiver at his ear gave forth a rhythmic drone, it seemed to Zaphiro, as he waited for the familiar voice to answer, that the lien which still bound him to his family and his former life was slenderer, oh, far slenderer, than the thin wire stretching from this instrument to his flat in Passy. How little it would take now to snap that bond, so that normal living as he used to know it would cease entirely! And then what? His future was as dark, as unhomely as this leather-padded cell, yet he knew that he must live in it. There was no going back to security, to order and to rest.

After he had conveyed his message, he would linger in the booth a moment longer, straightening his tie or using his pocket comb upon his hair — finding some excuse to prolong this little interlude between his two so different lives. When he pushed open the door and wandered back into the smoky lounge, he felt like a high diver, hurling himself from land into a foreign element.

One day when he came into the club lounge after flying there was a woman, whom he seemed to know, seated with a group of people in a corner. He had to go closer before he noticed her extreme pallor and recognized her as Lopez' mistress whom he had met when he called at the hotel that morning. Lopez by this time was well out on the high seas, but the people with whom she was conversing were known to Zaphiro.

'Have you met Madame ——?' said one of them, when he came up to the table.

'Why yes, I think I have.'

She looked up at Zaphiro curiously but without recognition.

'Madame once told me that I was too fat to fly. I'm afraid that she was wrong.'

She remembered then and laughed.

'But you haven't reduced as I told you to. You're fatter still today.'

'So sorry not to have taken your advice,' said Zaphiro, piqued.

'I get on quite well as it is.'

Everyone laughed.

'Oh yes,' agreed one of the men enthusiastically. 'Zaphiro gets

on all right. He's made terribly rapid progress — the instructor says that he simply can't teach him fast enough. When do you make your first solo flight, Zaphiro?'

'I have — today.'

'Really? That's splendid. You'll be taking your licence, soon.'

'I won't lose any time.'

'I'm sure you won't,' said Lopez' mistress. 'You don't look like a fellow who'd waste much time. And I suppose you've learned how to hustle in your calling.'

'Why, yes,' said Zaphiro, flushing deeply but trying to smile.

'No dilly-dallying when a customer's suit is to be got ready, eh?'

Zaphiro became intensely embarrassed and walked off to the bar. The others in the group smiled sheepishly, as people do when they feel that one of their number has made a tactless joke.

A few moments later, as he was finishing a drink and pretending to himself that he did not mind her remarks, he noticed that she was standing close beside him; her pale face smiled into his.

'Why, Mr. Zaphiro, don't you speak to me any more?'

'Why shouldn't I?'

'No reason. But I don't know what on earth you meant by walking off like that.'

'I'm sorry,' said Zaphiro, at once apologetic. 'Forgive me if I was rude.'

They talked for a while and she accepted his offer of a drink. Zaphiro found her very charming, easy to talk to, amusing in her repartees. He was delighted now that he had met her and the insult was quite forgotten; but just as they were saying good-bye another gentleman came up and asked her what the two of them had been discussing so earnestly.

'Nothing of great importance,' she said. 'Our friend here has just been telling me the best way to sew on buttons.'

This time Zaphiro was clever enough not to let on that he had been hit, though the insult rankled all the same.

'What does she mean by making fun of me — the little whore?' he thought. 'I could tell them a thing or two about her, too, if I felt like it.'

But he soon discovered that he really had nothing to tell — that is, nothing which she did not tell herself. She was quite brazen in discussing her relationship with Lopez and with various other men,

in fact went out of the way to relate all the juicy details, and one day stated calmly that there was not a single ace in France who had not at some time been her lover. Zaphiro discovered that she was a woman of independent wealth, the widow of a famous stunt aviator who had been killed two years before, and that she kept three aeroplanes of her own at Orly. Nevertheless she flew only infrequently nowadays and usually in other people's 'planes. The reason, she told Zaphiro, was not that she did not enjoy piloting, but simply that she could not be bothered; she preferred having someone else do the work. Since her husband's death, she had gradually lost her energy and power of initiative till the smallest effort now seemed too great for her to make; she merely existed and allowed circumstance to control her movements, but as to living in an active sense that was a thing of the past. Hence the disordered manner of her life, the three idle aeroplanes, the love affairs with every ace in France.

The better Zaphiro knew this woman, the more interested in her he became. At first he explained his attachment by the fact that she was so unlike anyone he had ever met before; she was a strange species of being who did and said exactly what came into her head with no regard to conventionality, decency or sense. If she felt like being rude to him she could be ruder than anybody else; and whereas the instructor's rudeness was concealed under a semblance of deference, hers was outspoken and purposefully cruel; the next moment she was talking to him with absorption and evident pleasure, signalling him out for her undivided attention. Then Zaphiro felt recompensed for the slights she had inflicted and even felt that, if he had the courage and bided his opportunity, it was on him that the mantle of Lopez and the hundred aces eventually would fall.

That something lay between them subtler than a developing flirtation Zaphiro was to realize late one rainy evening at the club. They had had dinner together — for the first time — and later swallowed any number of brandies, seated on a sofa by a window facing the flying field. In the half dark outside, the drizzle could be seen spattering down on the muddy tract, crisscrossing which the double tracks of aeroplane wheels were faintly visible; a row of sentinel lights picked out the boundaries of the field, while the sudden stab of the searchlight swept it periodically from end to end.

The lounge where they sat was dimly lit; they were the only people.

Suddenly she leaned forward, not looking at Zaphiro, but out of the window at the flying ground, and in a voice curiously lacking in the usual ironical undertone, she said:

'Yes, you see, that's how it is; one day one's life comes to a full stop — and then what? How shall one go on?'

Zaphiro's heart gave a thud; he looked at her intently, waiting for her to continue, feeling that her next words would throw light on the great darkness which he felt about him. But she smiled.

'Shrug your shoulders, my friend, shrug your shoulders. We lost people have no right to ask such questions.'

'What are you saying? I don't understand.'

'I said nothing. But you understand all too well. Don't let's try and fool each other, whatever else we do. It's too cheap a game to play.'

Zaphiro was silent; he felt that he had grown pale and that if he reached for the bottle to pour out brandy, he would spill some on the table.

'So it's all up with us?' he said after a moment.

'Oh, it's very pleasant to go on living.'

After that evening neither he nor she ever mentioned that conversation again. But it was not forgotten; it trembled in the air between them, and at times he was forcibly reminded of it, as of an undigested dinner.

Zaphiro planned to take his pilot's licence at the end of May and to begin flying his own aeroplane. His progress had really been remarkably rapid, for he had started learning less than six weeks before. All his acquaintances were astonished at his perseverance, his eagerness to get through the period of tuition in as brief a time as possible; many days he would fly twice, both mornings and afternoons, so as to have more flying hours to his credit; even when the weather hardly warranted a flight, he insisted on going up as usual. It was as if he were pressing towards a goal, the attainment of which was of supreme importance, though the reason for his undue haste he himself could not have stated.

He had not yet taken up the Farman, preferring to rent a plane for these trial flights. He did not want to risk crashing his darling, not having mastered the fine points of taking off and landing, and

besides, his insurance policy forbade him to use the plane without a licence. But he loved looking at it all the same. Once he had the covers stripped off, filled the tank with petrol, and taxied back and forth across the field, just to get the feel of the controls; he almost changed his mind and took it up on that occasion, actually accelerated the motor till it only needed a jerk at the joy stick for the monoplane to leave the ground; but at the last moment prudence prevailed, and he steered it back home to its hangar. No, the time had not yet come; he would have to wait a little longer.

As he was walking back to the clubhouse, he caught sight of Lopez' ex-mistress sitting on the stairs, watching him.

'What have you been doing, crawling around the field like that?' she called out, as he came up. 'Did you get cold feet, Zaphiro?'

He explained to her that it was Lopez' former aeroplane, and gave her the reason for his not wishing to take it up.

'Oh, so you bought the old rattletrap after all, did you?'

'Rattletrap? It's a beautiful machine!'

She looked at him curiously, as if she meant to say something, then changed her mind.

'All right — it's a beautiful machine. Seeing that you bought it, I suppose you ought to know.'

'You've been up in it?'

'Oh, several times. Lopez was a brilliant pilot — and a daring one.'

'Perhaps you'll come up with me some day?' said Zaphiro.

'Yes, perhaps I will — if I feel like it.'

'I'll tell you what,' pursued the Greek, struck by an idea. 'Why don't you come with me the first time I try it out? I ought to have my licence in a fortnight. It will be a sort of inauguration trip, and we'll go and drink some champagne afterwards.'

'Do you think that would be nice?'

'Yes, very nice. Will you do it?'

'I don't know. Perhaps. And after the champagne, what will happen then?'

'Anything you wish,' he answered.

'Shall we spend that night together?' she asked him suddenly.

Zaphiro felt a rush of blood into his face; his throat contracted with excitement, so that he could hardly speak.

'Are you joking with me?' he asked.

'No, I am not joking. I promise that if I go up in your plane I will spend the night with you afterwards — if I do decide to go up, that is.'

'Perhaps I'll hold you to your promise.'

'I'm sure you will, Zaphiro. You wouldn't be a Greek otherwise, would you?'

She began to laugh, rocking back and forth on the steps where she sat; she laughed loudly but without mirth, keeping her eyes wide open and fixed on Zaphiro the whole time. He did not know if she was laughing at him or at herself — probably at both of them, he decided in the end. He went indoors.

There was a spell of fine summer weather now, and Zaphiro spent most of his days up in the air. He neglected his business utterly, leaving matters in the hands of the two clerks who hardly knew what to do with their new authority. His family saw him rarely, some days not at all, as he used to leave early in the morning and only come back late at night. Rapidly he was flying through the dwindling hours which separated him from his licence; the desired goal was almost within his reach.

Ten days later he called her up at her apartment, for she had not shown up at the clubhouse since their conversation.

'I hope you haven't forgotten,' he began.

'I don't forget.'

'I received my licence half an hour ago; it looks very beautiful. When are we going flying in my aeroplane?'

'When are you?'

'Tomorrow, perhaps. Are you coming with me?'

'I don't know.'

'If not tomorrow, any day you like.'

'Oh, tomorrow is as good as any other day. I haven't quite decided. What hour are you going up?'

'Four o'clock, if it suits you — or earlier.'

'No, four is perfect. If I'm not there, you must go up without me.'

'I'll postpone the flight.'

'No, no, it won't do you any good, my friend. If I'm not there by four tomorrow, I shan't go up with you at all.'

'Very well.' He knew better than to argue. 'I hope very sincerely that you'll join me; for such an occasion one doesn't want to be alone. I desire it passionately for other reasons too.'

'Naturally — we know all about that. Don't try and telephone me again; I'll either come, or else I won't.'

Zaphiro woke up very early the next morning. He lay for some time in bed, excited and fully awake, staring at the ceiling with his hands behind his head. The room lay in near darkness, but in the dawn which filtered in through the tightly shuttered windows he could make out a couple of flies chasing each other around the hanging lamps suspended from the ceiling, buzzing as they made contact and attempted to accomplish the fornicating act in air, then chasing each other again. How strange, he reflected, that at every moment there are billions of lives around us, completing their small cycle, living, loving, dying — lives of which we are aware at best only for a second! Why, even within each person there are several hundred million separate organisms, each for all we know with his own consciousness, his sense of self-importance, if one may use the expression! Yes, they must all have consciousness, to a greater or a less degree, for otherwise they would cease to be alive, becoming part of the inanimate world, like a rock or bit of sediment.

And suddenly the thought occurred to him: yes, that is what has happened to me — just that. I have lost my sense of consciousness, the realization that I am myself, Nicolas Zaphiro, a tailor, a Greek. I have been looking at myself abstractly, from without, as I look at a man passing in the street or at those flies, and my sense of being alive has grown so weak that practically it does not exist. I have become a mere organism, moving instinctively, controlled by forces outside myself; I am just a man existing in the world; I have lost contact with myself.

He lay there quietly for a while, digesting this thought, not finding it unpleasant or disturbing, but merely extraordinary, as any self-evident truth which has so far escaped one seems extraordinary. He had lost his identity like those poor shellshocked fellows one read about who could not for the life of them remember their real name; but with him no catastrophe, no sudden blighting of the senses, was to blame — he had drifted into the condition slowly and inevitably. And he asked himself if many people at some period come to a state resembling suspended animation and if it is possible to pass beyond it into another life.

In her sleep his wife stirred uneasily, throwing her arm above her head. He turned his eyes towards her and for some moments lay

looking at that face which had once been dear to him, at the plump arm and the ineffective little hand that clenched the pillow. She sighed in an unhappy dream and he felt pity for her, not because he knew that he was the cause of her sigh but because he thought of her now as one of those hundred billion living creatures feeling and conscious as he once had been.

All at once and for no reason in particular he remembered a promise he had made her to change his will. The change concerned some Greek government bonds he owned and which he had stipulated should go to his younger brother, but he had quarrelled with this same brother a good time ago and had determined to transfer the bonds to his capital estate whence they would pass to his wife upon his death. Months had gone by but he had as yet done nothing. He made up his mind that he would put it off no longer; he would pay a visit to his lawyer that very morning.

As he was dressing a half-hour later, it struck him that there was something else he ought to do: look up Diamantopoulos. It was curious that he should have remembered his old friend just on that day which was already so well occupied, for he had neither seen him nor thought of him since the unfortunate episode following the birthday party. Looking back at his behaviour now, it seemed to him almost inconceivable that he could have acted so unkindly; without a doubt he must take steps to patch up their quarrel, and that with the least possible delay.

He had a busy morning. First he went to the lawyer and arranged about his will — actually insisted on signing the new codicil then and there, though the lawyer suggested that he post him on the document; next he called up Diamantopoulos and made an engagement with him for lunch. In the meanwhile he had thought of several other things to see to — matters which had been hanging over for long, and which ought finally to be settled. He could not understand why he had put off doing all these things till now.

He did not get to the aerodrome till half-past three, though he had meant to arrive much earlier to attend to the fueling of the plane, and also to test the engine and the body struts, seeing that it was almost two months since it had been flown. His lunch with Diamantopoulos had been a great success; not only had they entirely made up their misunderstanding but they had agreed to see each other in the future as often as they always used to in the past. Zaphiro kept

asking himself how he could have allowed the two of them to drift apart; he was pleased that he had had the idea of calling up his friend, and that he had not put off their reconciliation another day. Now it was almost four o'clock and he was standing by the aeroplane, the propellers of which were turning slowly as the mechanic completed his brief tuning up of the machine.

Zaphiro kept glancing down the cinder path towards the entrance of the aerodrome through which his passenger would be bound to arrive. She was not late yet, but he became more nervous with every passing minute, for she had said that she would come promptly if she came at all. He had practically given up hope when he caught sight of the yellow and black cabriolet turning in through the gates and, with the now familiar sensation of the inevitable fulfilling itself, realized that he had known in his heart that she would come; despite his superficial surprise at seeing her, he was aware that this was right — that everything was working out according to schedule. A few moments later she was standing beside him in her green flying kit; her manner was aloof and vaguely bored, as if a hundred times already she had lived through the experiences that lay ahead of her and they had lost their poignancy and zest.

'Well, you've come!' said Zaphiro, trying to control the excitement which he felt rising in his throat.

'So you see. Is everything ready?'

'All ready. I was terribly afraid that you would not show up. I can't tell you how glad ——'

'Don't Zaphiro, don't. What's the use? Do let's get started if we're going.'

He helped her into the rear cockpit and stood fastening his helmet strap underneath his chin.

'Zaphiro!' she called, as he was about to climb into his seat.

'Yes, what is it?'

'Let's see what you can do in the way of tricks — try a few spins and loops. It's a beautiful little aeroplane for stunt flying.'

'And you've kept on telling me that it's a rattletrap!'

'Oh, I was joking — I assure you that I was joking. You mustn't believe everything I say.'

He put his foot on the grooved aluminum step and swung himself into his seat. Twice he accelerated the motor, each time allowing it to die down again; it was running beautifully. Then he raised his

arm as a signal for the mechanic to kick away the wooden props beneath the wheels. Slowly the aeroplane left the concrete foundation, taxied the full length of the field tilting slightly from side to side — then with a roar of its engine shot forward and eventually upwards into the blue.

Of all the planes Zaphiro had used since he began to fly, first the instruction planes, then those he rented for his trial flights, he never had been in one which suited him so perfectly as this. It responded to his wishes almost before he touched the controls; he had the 'feel' of the plane after he had flown a hundred yards. He knew that this plane had been made for him, or perhaps it was he who had been born to fly the plane.

After they had been in the air ten minutes he let the motor full out and he thrilled to see the red arrow on his dashboard mount up to the two hundred kilometre mark and stay there quivering as long as his foot pressed down on the accelerator; then he let it swerve back to a hundred and eighty — a hundred and sixty — a hundred and forty, and kept it there with the lightest pressure upon the pedal; this was the normal cruising speed of the monoplane.

Adjusting his goggles, he turned around to see if his passenger were enjoying it. She sat quite still with her eyes closed, breathing deeply; he might have thought she was asleep except that as he watched her she carried her hand to her high forehead and passed her palm gently across its surface. She was even paler than usual, her thin face was as white as if she had powdered to excess, and the thin line of the lips was barely visible.

'What a woman!' he thought. 'She seems hardly human. Perhaps she was right when she told me that she had died two years ago.'

But he was not frightened of her, nevertheless; he was beyond feeling fear.

The aeroplane rushed along faster than any bird has flown and presently Zaphiro saw beneath him the blue ribbon of the Marne. He followed the river up as far as the hills of Chennevières, then left it near its junction with the Seine to speed back towards Orly with the wind behind him and the aeroplane riding on its lap as smoothly as a galleon before a steady breeze.

Espying the familiar landing field below, Zaphiro remembered his passenger's request to perform some stunts, and he headed the

aeroplane downwards for a nose spin. The plane responded perfectly as ever to his touch; it tilted forward till it had reached an angle almost perpendicular to the ground, then shot downwards at a terrific speed while Zaphiro, fingering the joystick with loving and sensitive fingers, waited for the exact moment when he should break the fall and allow the plane to right itself. The wind whistled in his ears; the hangar at which he drove grew larger, larger. Zaphiro's fingers closed about the lever and he drew it towards him.

And then he realized that there was something wrong — so wrong that it would never be set right. The aeroplane lurched sideways in its fall and, casting a glance in that direction, he saw the wing even as he looked detaching itself from the body, the struts split in twain: he saw the hangar and the field and beyond them the white thread of the road, but they were all swinging rapidly upwards and around, making him as it were the axis of an enormous circle.

This all he saw clearly and he realized that he would die, but he realized also that he had known this before — known it a very long time, it seemed to him. Now he understood much that had been troubling him of late. Viewing these last months as a preparatory period to death, he saw that he had long since come to a point when he had no further reason to go on living, when his life logically speaking had reached its end. He had received his marching orders at that time and, all without knowing it, had gone off to seek the instrument of destruction. No wonder that he had snatched so eagerly at Lopez' aeroplane! Then he must have realized all along that it would end like this. How clear and simple it seemed now! Everything fitted in down to the smallest details — even to his desire that morning to transfer the stock. So death is always suicide, flashed through his mind. He understood and he wondered why he was the only man to grasp the truth.

The aeroplane with ever greater speed was hurtling to the ground. The wing detached itself completely and, writhing in mid-air, fell slower than the body; for a brief moment it lived its independent life, then crashed and crumbled some distance from the plane.

THE OLD ORDER¹

By KATHERINE ANNE PORTER

(From *The Southern Review*)

IN THEIR later years, the Grandmother and old Nannie used to sit together for some hours every day over their sewing. They shared a passion for cutting scraps of the family finery, hoarded for fifty years, into strips and triangles, and fitting them together again in a carefully disordered patchwork, outlining each bit of velvet or satin or taffeta with a running briar stitch in clear lemon-colored silk floss. They had contrived enough bed and couch covers, table spreads, dressing table scarfs, to have furnished forth several households. Each piece as it was finished was lined with yellow silk, folded, and laid away in a chest, never again to see the light of day. The Grandmother was the great-grand-daughter of Kentucky's most famous pioneer: he had, while he was surveying Kentucky, hewed out rather competently a rolling pin for his wife. This rolling pin was the Grandmother's irreplaceable treasure. She covered it with an extraordinarily complicated bit of patchwork, added golden tassels to the handles, and hung it in a conspicuous place in her room. She was the daughter of a notably heroic captain in the War of 1812. She had his razors in a shagreen case and a particularly severe-looking daguerreotype taken in his old age, with his chin in a tall stock and his black satin waistcoat smoothed over a still-hand-some military chest. So she fitted a patchwork case over the shagreen and made a sort of envelope of cut velvet and violet satin, held together with briar stitching, to contain the portrait. The rest of her handiwork she put away, to the relief of her grandchildren, who had arrived at the awkward age when Grandmother's quaint old-fashioned ways caused them acute discomfort.

In the summer the women sat under the mingled trees of the side garden, which commanded a view of the east wing, the front and back porches, a good part of the front garden and a corner of the small fig grove. Their choice of this location was a part of their

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domestic strategy. Very little escaped them: a glance now and then would serve to keep them fairly well informed as to what was going on in the whole place. It is true they had not seen Miranda the day she pulled up the whole mint bed to give to a pleasant strange young woman who stopped and asked her for a sprig of fresh mint. They had never found out who stole the giant pomegranates growing too near the fence: they had not been in time to stop Paul from setting himself on fire while experimenting with a miniature blowtorch, but they had been on the scene to extinguish him with rugs, to pour oil on him, and lecture him. They never saw Maria climbing trees, a mania she had to indulge or pine away, for she chose tall ones on the opposite side of the house. But such casualties were so minor a part of the perpetual round of events that they did not feel defeated nor that their strategy was a failure. Summer, in many ways so desirable a season, had its drawbacks. The children were everywhere at once and the negroes loved lying under the hackberry grove back of the barns playing seven-up, and eating watermelons. The summer house was in a small town a few miles from the farm, a compromise between the rigorously ordered house in the city and the sprawling old farm house which Grandmother had built with such pride and pains. It had, she often said, none of the advantages of either country or city, and all the discomforts of both. But the children loved it.

During the winters in the city, they sat in Grandmother's room, a large squarish place with a small coal grate. All the sounds of life in the household seemed to converge there, echo, retreat, and return. Grandmother and Aunt Nannie knew the whole complicated code of sounds, could interpret and comment on them by an exchange of glances, a lifted eyebrow, or a tiny pause in their talk.

They talked about the past, really — always about the past. Even the future seemed like something gone and done with when they spoke of it. It did not seem an extension of their past, but a repetition of it. They would agree that nothing remained of life as they had known it, the world was changing swiftly, but by the mysterious logic of hope they insisted that each change was probably the last; or if not, a series of changes might bring them, blessedly, back full-circle to the old ways they had known. Who knows why they loved their past? It had been bitter for them both, they had questioned the burdensome rule they lived by every day of their

lives, but without rebellion and without expecting an answer. This unbroken thread of inquiry in their minds contained no doubt as to the utter rightness and justice of the basic laws of human existence, founded as they were on God's plan; but they wondered perpetually, with only a hint now and then to each other of the uneasiness of their hearts, how so much suffering and confusion could have been built up and maintained on such a foundation. The Grandmother's rôle was authority, she knew that; it was her duty to portion out activities, to urge or restrain where necessary, to teach morals, manners, and religion, to punish and reward her own household according to a fixed code. Her own doubts and hesitations she concealed, also, she reminded herself, as a matter of duty. Old Nannie had no ideas at all as to her place in the world. It had been assigned to her before birth, and for her daily rule she had all her life obeyed the authority nearest to her.

So they talked about God, about heaven, about planting a new hedge of rose bushes, about the new ways of preserving fruit and vegetables, about eternity and their mutual hope that they might pass it happily together, and often a scrap of silk under their hands would start them on long trains of family reminiscences. They were always amused to notice again how the working of their memories differed in such important ways. Nannie could recall names to perfection; she could always say what the weather had been like on all important occasions, what certain ladies had worn, how handsome certain gentlemen had been, what there had been to eat and drink. Grandmother had masses of dates in her mind, and no memories attached to them: her memories of events seemed detached and floating beyond time. For example, the 26th of August, 1871, had been some sort of red-letter day for her. She had said to herself then that never would she forget that date; and indeed, she remembered it well, but what had happened to stamp it on her memory she no longer had the faintest notion. Nannie was no help in the matter; she had nothing to do with dates. She did not know the year of her birth, and would never have had a birthday to celebrate if Grandmother had not, when she was still Miss Sophia Jane, aged ten, opened a calendar at random, closed her eyes, and marked a date unseen with a pen. So it turned out that Nannie's birthday thereafter fell on June 11, and the year, Miss Sophia Jane decided, should be 1827, her own birth-year, making Nannie just

three months younger than her mistress. Sophia Jane then made an entry of Nannie's birth-date in the family Bible, inserting it just below her own. 'Nanny Gay,' she wrote, in stiff careful letters, '(black),' and though there was some uproar when this was discovered, the ink was long since sunk deeply into the paper, and besides no one was really upset enough to have it scratched out. There it remained, one of their pleasantest points of reference.

They talked about religion, and the slack way the world was going nowadays, the decay of behavior, and about the younger children, whom these topics always brought at once to mind. On these subjects they were firm, critical, and unbewildered. They had received educations which furnished them an assured habit of mind about all the important appearances of life, and especially about the rearing of young. They relied with perfect acquiescence on the dogma that children were conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity. Childhood was a long state of instruction and probation for adult life, which was in turn a long, severe, undeviating devotion to duty, the largest part of which consisted in bringing up children. The young were difficult, disobedient, and tireless in wrongdoing, apt to turn unkind and undutiful when they grew up, in spite of all one had done for them, or had tried to do: for small painful doubts rose in them now and again when they looked at their completed works. Nannie couldn't abide her new-fangled grandchildren. 'Wuthless, shiftless lot, jes plain scum, Miss Sophia Jane; I cain't undahstand it aftah all the raisin' dey had.'

The Grandmother defended them, and dispraised her own second generation — heartily, too, for she sincerely found grave faults in them — which Nannie defended in turn. 'When they are little, they trample on your feet, and when they grow up they trample on your heart.' This was about all there was to say about children in any generation, but the fascination of the theme was endless. They said it thoroughly over and over with thousands of small variations, with always an example among their own friends or family connections to prove it. They had enough material of their own. Grandmother had borne eleven children, Nannie thirteen. They boasted of it. Grandmother would say, 'I am the mother of eleven children,' in a faintly amazed tone, as if she hardly expected to be believed, or could even quite believe it herself. But she could still point to nine of them. Nannie had lost ten of hers. They were all

buried in Kentucky. Nannie never doubted or expected anyone else to doubt she had children. Her boasting was of another order. 'Thirteen of 'em,' she would say, in an appalled voice, 'Yas, my Lawd and my Redeemah, thirteen!'

The friendship between the two old women had begun in early childhood, and was based on what seemed even to them almost mythical events. Miss Sophia Jane, a prissy, spoiled five-year-old, with tight black ringlets which were curled every day on a stick, with her stiffly pleated lawn pantalettes and tight bodice, had run to meet her returning father, who had been away buying horses and negroes. Sitting on his arm, clasping him around the neck, she had watched the wagons filing past on the way to the barns and quarters. On the floor of the first wagon sat two blacks, male and female, holding between them a scrawny, half-naked black child, with a round nubly head and fixed bright monkey eyes. The baby negro had a pot-belly and her arms were like sticks from wrist to shoulder. She clung with narrow, withered, black leather fingers to her parents, a hand on each.

'I want the little monkey,' said Sophia Jane to her father, nuzzling his cheek and pointing. 'I want that one to play with.'

Behind each wagon came two horses in lead, but in the second wagon there was a small shaggy pony with a thatch of mane over his eyes, a long tail like a brush, a round, hard barrel of a body. He was standing in straw to the knees, braced firmly in a padded stall with a negro holding his bridle. 'Do you see that?' asked her father. 'That's for you. High time you learned to ride.'

Sophia Jane almost leaped from his arm for joy. She hardly recognized her pony or her monkey the next day, the one clipped and sleek, the other clean in new blue cotton. For a while she could not decide which she loved more, Nannie or Fiddler. But Fiddler did not wear well. She outgrew him in a year, saw him pass without regret to a small brother, though she refused to allow him to be called Fiddler any longer. That name she reserved for a long series of saddle horses. She had named the first in honor of Fiddler Gay, an old negro who made the music for dances and parties. There was only one Nannie and she outwore Sophia Jane. During all their lives together it was not so much a question of affection between them as a simple matter of being unable to imagine getting on without each other.

Nannie remembered well being on a shallow platform out in front of a great building in a large busy place, the first town she had ever seen. Her father and mother were with her, and there was a thick crowd around them. There were several other small groups of negroes huddled together with white men bustling them about now and then. She had never seen any of these faces before, and she never saw but one of them again. She remembered it must have been summer, because she was not shivering with cold in her cotton shift. For one thing, her bottom was still burning from a spanking someone (it might have been her mother) had given her just before they got on the platform, to remind her to keep still. Her mother and father were field hands, and had never lived in white folks' houses. A tall gentleman with a long narrow face and very high curved nose, wearing a great-collared blue coat and immensely long light-colored trousers (Nannie could close her eyes and see him again, clearly, as he looked that day) stepped up near them suddenly, while a great hubbub rose. The red-faced man standing on a stump beside them shouted and droned, waving his arms and pointing at Nannie's father and mother. Now and then the tall gentleman raised a finger, without looking at the black people on the platform. Suddenly the shouting died down, the tall gentleman walked over and said, to Nannie's father and mother, 'Well, Eph! Well, Steeny! Mister Jimmerson comin' to get you in a minute.' He poked Nannie in the stomach with a thickly gloved forefinger. 'Regular crowbait,' he said to the auctioneer. 'I should have had lagniappe with this one.'

'A pretty worthless article right now, sir, I agree with you,' said the auctioneer, 'but it'll grow out of it. As for the team, you won't find a better, I swear.'

'I've had an eye on 'em for years,' said the tall gentleman, and walked away, motioning as he went to a fat man sitting on a wagon tongue, spitting quantities of tobacco juice. The fat man rose and came over to Nannie and her parents.

Nannie had been sold for twenty dollars: a gift, you might say, hardly sold at all. She learned that a really choice slave sometimes costs more than a thousand dollars. She lived to hear slaves brag about how much they had cost. She had not known how little she fetched on the block until her own mother taunted her with it. This was after Nannie had gone to live for good at the big house, and her

mother and father were still in the fields. They lived and worked and died there. A good worming had cured Nannie's pot-belly, she thrived on plentiful food and a species of kindness not so indulgent, maybe, as that given to the puppies; still it more than fulfilled her notions of good fortune.

The old women often talked about how strangely things come out in this life. The first owner of Nannie and her parents had gone, Sophia Jane's father said, hog-wild about Texas. It was a new Land of Promise, in 1832. He had sold out his farm and four slaves in Kentucky to raise the money to take a great twenty-mile stretch of land in southwest Texas. He had taken his wife and two young children and set out, and there had been no more news of him for many years. When Grandmother arrived in Texas forty years later, she found him a prosperous ranchman and district judge. Much later, her youngest son met his granddaughter, fell in love with her, and married her — all in three months.

The judge, by then eighty-five years old, was uproarious and festive at the wedding. He reeked of corn liquor, swore by God every other breath, and was rearing to talk about the good old times in Kentucky. The Grandmother showed Nannie to him. 'Would you recognize her?' 'For God Almighty's sake!' bawled the judge, 'is that the strip of crowbait I sold to your father for twenty dollars? Twenty dollars seemed like a fortune to me in those days!'

While they were jolting home down the steep rocky road on the long journey from San Marcos to Austin, Nannie finally spoke out about her grievance. 'Look lak a jedge might had better raisin',' she said, gloomily, 'look lak he didn't keer how much he hurt a body's feelins.'

The Grandmother, muffled down in the back seat in the corner of the old carryall, in her worn sealskin pelisse, showing coffee-brown at the edges, her eyes closed, her hands wrung together, had been occupied once more in reconciling herself to losing a son, and, as ever, to a girl and a family of which she could not altogether approve. It was not that there was anything seriously damaging to be said against any of them; only — well, she wondered at her sons' tastes. What had each of them in turn found in the wife he had chosen? The Grandmother had always had in mind the kind of wife each of her sons needed; she had tried to bring about better mar-

riages for them than they had made for themselves. They had merely resented her interference in what they considered strictly their personal affairs. She did not realize that she had spoiled and pampered her youngest son until he was in all probability unfit to be any kind of a husband, much less a good one. And there was something about her new daughter-in-law, a tall, handsome, firm-looking young woman, with a direct way of speaking, walking, talking, that seemed to promise that the spoiled Baby's days of clover were ended. The Grandmother was annoyed deeply at seeing how self-possessed the bride had been, how she had had her way about the wedding arrangements down to the last detail, how she glanced now and then at her new husband with calm, humorous, level eyes, as if she had already got him sized up. She had even suggested at the wedding dinner that her idea of a honeymoon would be to follow the chuck-wagon on the round-up, and help in the cattle-branding on her father's ranch. Of course she may have been joking. But she was altogether too Western, too modern, something like the 'new' woman who was beginning to run wild, asking for the vote, leaving her home and going out in the world to earn her own living . . .

The Grandmother's narrow body shuddered to the bone at the thought of women so unsexing themselves; she emerged with a start from the dark reverie of foreboding thoughts which left a bitter taste in her throat. 'Never mind, Nannie. The judge just wasn't thinking. He's very fond of his good cheer.'

Nannie had slept in a bed and had been playmate and work-fellow with her mistress; they fought on almost equal terms, Sophia Jane defending Nannie fiercely against any discipline but her own. When they were both seventeen years old, Miss Sophia Jane was married off in a very gay wedding. The house was jammed to the roof and everybody present was at least fourth cousin to everybody else. There were forty carriages and more than two hundred horses to look after for two days. When the last wheel disappeared down the lane (a number of the guests lingered on for two weeks), the larders and bins were half empty and the place looked as if a troop of cavalry had been over it. A few days later Nannie was married off to a boy she had known ever since she came to the family, and they were given as a wedding present to Miss Sophia Jane.

Miss Sophia Jane and Nannie had then started their grim and terrible race of procreation, a child every sixteen months or so, with

Nannie nursing both, and Sophia Jane, in dreadful discomfort, suppressing her milk with bandages and spirits of wine. When they each had produced their fourth child, Nannie almost died of puerperal fever. Sophia Jane nursed both children. She named the black baby Charlie, and her own child Stephen, and she fed them justly turn about, not favoring the white over the black, as Nannie felt obliged to do. Her husband was shocked, tried to forbid her; her mother came to see her and reasoned with her. They found her very difficult, and quite stubborn. She had already begun to develop her implicit character, which was altogether just, humane, proud, and simple. She had many small vanities and weaknesses on the surface: a love of luxury and a tendency to resent criticism. This tendency was based on her feeling of superiority in judgment and sensibility to almost everyone around her. It made her very hard to manage. She had a quiet way of holding her ground which convinced her antagonist that she would really die, not just threaten to, rather than give way. She had learned now that she was badly cheated in giving her children to another woman to feed; she resolved never again to be cheated in just that way. She sat nursing her child and her foster child, with a sensual warm pleasure she had not dreamed of, translating her natural physical relief into something holy, God-sent, amends from heaven for what she had suffered in childbed. Yes, and for what she missed in the marriage bed, for there also something had failed. She said to Nannie quite calmly, 'From now on, you will nurse your children and I will nurse mine,' and it was so. Charles remained her special favorite among the negro children. 'I understand now,' she said to her older sister Keziah, 'why the black mammies love their foster children. I love mine.' So Charlie was brought up in the house as playmate for her son Stephen, and exempted from hard work all his life.

Sophia Jane had been wooed at arm's length by a mysteriously attractive young man whom she remembered well as rather a snubby little boy with curls like her own, but shorter, a frilled white blouse and kilts of the Macdonald tartan. He was her second cousin and resembled her so closely they had been mistaken for brother and sister. Their grandparents had been first cousins, and sometimes Sophia Jane saw in him, years after they were married, all the faults she had most abhorred in her elder brother; lack of aim, failure to act at crises, a philosophic detachment from practical affairs, a ten-

dency to set projects on foot and then leave them to perish or to be finished by someone else; and a profound conviction that everyone around him should be happy to wait upon him hand and foot. She had fought these fatal tendencies in her brother, within the bounds of wifely prudence she fought them in her husband, she was long after to fight them again in two of her sons and in several of her grandchildren. She gained no victory in any case, the selfish, careless, unloving creatures lived and ended as they had begun. But the Grandmother developed a character truly portentous under the discipline of trying to change the characters of others. . . . Her husband shared with her the family sharpness of eye. He disliked and feared her deadly wilfulness, her certainty that her ways were not only right but beyond criticism, that her feelings were important, even in the lightest matter, and must not be tampered with or treated casually. He had disappeared at the critical moment when they were growing up, had gone to college and then for travel; she forgot him for a long time, and when she saw him again forgot him as he had been once for all. She was gay and sweet and decorous, full of vanity and incredibly exalted day-dreams which threatened now and again to cast her over the edge of some mysterious forbidden frenzy. She dreamed recurrently that she had lost her virginity (her virtue, she called it), her sole claim to regard, consideration, even to existence, and after frightful moral suffering which masked altogether her physical experience she would wake in a cold sweat, disordered and terrified. She had heard that her cousin Stephen was a little 'wild,' but that was to be expected. He was leading, no doubt, a dashing life full of manly indulgences, the sweet dark life of the knowledge of evil which caused her hair to crinkle on her scalp when she thought of it. Ah, the delicious, the free, the wonderful, the mysterious and terrible life of men! She thought about it a great deal. 'Little day-dreamer,' her mother or father would say to her, surprising her in a brown study, eyes moist, lips smiling vaguely over her embroidery or her book, or with hands fallen on her lap, her face turned away to a blank wall. She memorized and saved for these moments scraps of high-minded poetry, which she instantly quoted at them when they offered her a penny for her thoughts; or she broke into a melancholy little song of some kind, a song she knew they liked. She would run to the piano and tinkle the tune out with one hand, saying 'I love this part best,' leaving no doubt in their

minds as to what her own had been occupied with. She lived her whole youth so, without once giving herself away; not until she was in middle age, her husband dead, her property dispersed, and she found herself with a houseful of children, making a new life for them in another place, with all the responsibilities of a man but with none of the privileges, did she finally emerge into something like an honest life: and yet, she was passionately honest. She had never been anything else.

Sitting under the trees with Nannie, both of them old and their long battle with life almost finished, she said, fingering a scrap of satin, 'It was not fair that Sister Keziah should have had this ivory brocade for her wedding dress, and I had only dotted swiss . . .'

'Times was harder when you got married, Missy,' said Nannie. 'Dat was de yeah all de crops failed.'

'And they failed ever afterward, it seems to me,' said Grandmother.

'Seems to me like,' said Nannie, 'dotted swiss was all the style when you got married.'

'I never cared for it,' said Grandmother.

Nannie, born in slavery, was pleased to think she would not die in it. She was wounded not so much by her state of being as by the word describing it. Emancipation was a sweet word to her. It had not changed her way of living in a single particular, but she was proud of having been able to say to her mistress 'I aim to stay wid you as long as you'll have me.' Still, Emancipation had seemed to set right a wrong that stuck in her heart like a thorn. She could not understand why God, Whom she loved, had seen fit to be so hard on a whole race because they had got a certain kind of skin. She talked it over with Miss Sophia Jane. Many times. Miss Sophia Jane was always brisk and opinionated about it: 'Nonsense! I tell you, God does not know whether a skin is black or white. He sees only souls. Don't be getting notions, Nannie — of course, you're going to Heaven.'

Nannie showed the rudiments of logic in a mind altogether untutored. She wondered, simply and without resentment, whether God, Who had been so cruel to black people on earth, might not continue His severity in the next world. Miss Sophia Jane took pleasure in reassuring her; as if she, who had been responsible for

Nannie, body and soul in this life, might also be her sponsor before the judgment seat.

Miss Sophia Jane had taken upon herself all the responsibilities of her tangled world, half white, half black, mingling steadily and the confusion growing ever deeper. There were so many young men about the place, always, younger brothers-in-law, first cousins, second cousins, nephews. They came visiting and they stayed, and there was no accounting for them nor any way of controlling their quietly headstrong habits. She learned early to keep silent and give no sign of uneasiness, but whenever a child was born in the negro quarters, pink, worm-like, she 'held her breath for three days,' she told her eldest granddaughter, years later, to see whether the newly born would turn black after the proper interval . . . It was a strain that told on her, and ended by giving her a deeply grained contempt for men. She could not help it, she despised men. She despised them and was ruled by them. Her husband threw away her dowry and her property in wild investments in strange territories: Louisiana, Texas; and without protest she watched him play away her substance like a gambler. She felt that she could have managed her affairs profitably. But her natural activities lay elsewhere, it was the business of a man to make all decisions and dispose of all financial matters. Yet when she got the reins in her hands, her sons could persuade her to this and that enterprise or investment; against her will and judgment she accepted their advice, and among them they managed to break up once more the stronghold she had built for the future of her family. They got from her their own start in life, came back for fresh help when they needed it, and were divided against each other. She saw it as her natural duty to provide for her household, after her husband had fought stubbornly through the War, along with every other man of military age in the connection; had been wounded, had lingered helpless, and had died of his wound long after the great fervor and excitement had faded in hopeless defeat, when to be a man wounded and ruined in the War was merely to have proved oneself, perhaps, more heroic than wise. Left so, she drew her family together and set out for Louisiana, where her husband, with her money, had bought a sugar refinery. There was going to be a fortune in sugar, he said; not in raising the raw material, but in manufacturing it. He had schemes in his head for operating cotton gins, flour mills, refineries. Had he lived . . .

but he did not live, and Sophia Jane had hardly repaired the house she bought and got the orchard planted when she saw that, in her hands, the sugar refinery was going to be a failure.

She sold out at a loss, and went on to Texas, where her husband had bought cheaply, some years before, a large tract of fertile black land in an almost unsettled part of the country. She had with her nine children, the youngest about two, the eldest about seventeen years old; Nannie and her three sons, Uncle Jimbilly, and two other negroes, all in good health, full of hope and greatly desiring to live. Her husband's ghost persisted in her, she was bitterly outraged by his death almost as if he had wilfully deserted her. She mourned for him at first with dry eyes, angrily. Twenty years later, seeing after a long absence the eldest son of her favorite daughter, who had died early, she recognized the very features and look of the husband of her youth, and she wept.

During the terrible second year in Texas, two of her younger sons, Harry and Robert, suddenly ran away. They chose good weather for it, in mid-May, and they were almost seven miles from home when a neighboring farmer saw them, wondered and asked questions; and ended by persuading them into his gig, and so brought them back.

Miss Sophia Jane went through the dreary ritual of discipline she thought appropriate to the occasion. She whipped them with her riding whip. Then she made them kneel down with her while she prayed for them, asking God to help them mend their ways and not be undutiful to their mother; her duty performed, she broke down and wept with her arms around them. They had endured their punishment stoically, because it would have been disgraceful to cry when a woman hit them, and besides, she did not hit very hard; they had knelt with her in a shame-faced gloom, because religious feeling was a female mystery which embarrassed them, but when they saw her tears they burst into loud bellows of repentance. They were only nine and eleven years old. She said in a voice of mourning, so despairing it frightened them: 'Why did you run away from me? What do you think I brought you here for?' as if they were grown men who could realize how terrible the situation was. All the answer they could make, as they wept too, was that they had wanted to go back to Louisiana to eat sugar cane. They had been thinking about sugar cane all winter . . . Their mother was stunned. She had built a

house large enough to shelter them all, of hand-sawed lumber dragged by ox-cart for forty miles, she had got the fields fenced in and the crops planted, she had, she believed, fed and clothed her children; and now she realized they were hungry. These two had worked like men; she felt their growing bones through their thin flesh, and remembered how mercilessly she had driven them, as she had driven herself, as she had driven the negroes and the horses, because there was no choice in the matter. They must labor beyond their strength or perish. Sitting there with her arms around them, she felt her heart break in her breast. She had thought it was a silly phrase. It happened to her. It was not that she was incapable of feeling afterward, for in a way she was more emotional, more quick, but griefs never again lasted with her so long as they had before. This day was the beginning of her spoiling her children and being afraid of them. She said to them after a long dazed silence, when they began to grow restless under her arms: 'We'll grow fine ribbon cane here. The soil is perfect for it. We'll have all the sugar we want. But we must be patient.'

By the time her children began to marry, she was able to give them each a good strip of land and a little money, she was able to help them buy more land in places they preferred by selling her own, tract by tract, and she saw them all begin well, though not all of them ended so. They went about their own affairs, scattering out and seeming to lose all that sense of family unity so precious to the Grandmother. They bore with her infrequent visits and her advice and her tremendous rightness, and they were impatient of her tenderness. When Harry's wife died — she had never approved of Harry's wife, who was delicate and hopelessly inadequate at house-keeping, and who could not even bear children successfully, since she died when her third was born — the Grandmother took the children and began life again, with almost the same zest, and with more indulgence. She had just got them brought up to the point where she felt she could begin to work the faults out of them — faults inherited, she admitted fairly, from both sides of the house — when she died. It happened quite suddenly one afternoon in early October, after a day spent in helping the Mexican gardener of her third daughter-in-law to put the garden to rights. She was on a visit in far western Texas and enjoying it. The daughter-in-law was

exasperated but apparently so docile, the Grandmother, who looked upon her as a child, did not notice her little moods at all. The son had long ago learned not to oppose his mother. She wore him down with patient, just, and reasonable argument. She was careful never to venture to command him in anything. He consoled his wife by saying that everything Mother was doing could be changed back after she was gone. As this change included moving a fifty-foot adobe wall, the wife was not much consoled. The Grandmother came into the house quite flushed and exhilarated, saying how well she felt in the bracing mountain air — and dropped dead over the doorsill.

A PASSENGER TO BALI¹

By ELLIS ST. JOSEPH

(From *Story*)

PERHAPS the writing of this story will serve to expel from my mind my last lingering glimpse of Walkes as I left him, a vision that appears more real in retrospect than it did at the time. It has grown real in the fourteen years that have passed. Mind you, I accept no more responsibility for the man's end (if it was an end) than I did for the beginning of our peregrinations together. It was what some men call chance, and others destiny, that linked our lives on the dock at Shanghai and alike disrupted them two hundred miles out at sea. I merely accepted him as a passenger on the *Roundabout* — a tramp steamer flying the British flag, carrying a crew of three white officers and twenty Kanaka boys — which I owned, and put to trade in the Southern Pacific.

It was a dark, moonless night. A cold fog lay heavily upon the swirling yellow river water. We were already loaded and ready to sail and the long line of Chinese women, balancing baskets of coal upon their heads, was coming to an end. The medley of Oriental dock noises, exploring the scale between the screech of a pulley and the thunder of a falling bale, lingered in the soupy air, both pleasing and irritating, harmonious and discordant, striking the Western ear like Eastern music. The boat was tugging gently at its ropes as though eager to get under way.

I was about to mount the bridge when a large figure emerged from the fog and loomed before and above me. If the man's height had not been enough to command attention — for he towered five inches over my own six feet — his very bulk encountered at such close quarters would have obscured the view. He spoke in a booming voice.

'Have I the honor of addressing Captain Jan English of the *Roundabout*?' he shouted.

'I am Captain English.'

'Allow me to introduce myself, Captain *English*.' He placed upon

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my name a bold emphasis that would have been ironic had he any reason for being so. 'I am the Rev. Dr. Raube Walkes, a Dutch missionary, bound for Bali, to distribute Bibles and spread the word of God and Jesus Christ, His Son, our Saviour!'

So saying, he turned his attention to an inside pocket of his enormous greatcoat, a bell-like garment that swelled out all around him. I seized this occasion to study him. Ever since my childhood I have felt shy in the presence of clergymen, and even now their presence is enough to make me feel like a child. Everything about his face seemed to turn up: his mouth at the corners, his blond eyebrows, his faintly broken nose, and finally, as he looked up and caught my stare, his frank blue eyes themselves rolled heavenward. Their gaze embarrassed me.

'So you're looking at this thing men call my face!' said he, smiling. 'Have you seen it before?'

'No,' I answered.

'So much the better, Captain *English*,' he declared. 'We can start from scratch. I am not given to wasting my words in mundane affairs. Most ministers pile up their words as a monument to their own eloquence. Not I! I save my breath. You will see how brief, how very brief, I can be —'

'Yes, yes, Dr. Walkes,' I interrupted. 'But come to your point. We're about to sail.'

'Captain *English*,' he boomed, accenting my name as though it had some special significance for him, 'I am told your boat puts in at Buelelong, the Port of Bali. Is that correct?'

I nodded; whereat he drew a huge pin seal folder from an inside pocket and handed it to me. 'Here you will find a passport, several papers for identification — mostly clerical — and about four hundred in American dollars. Be good enough to examine these. If the papers, the money and myself meet with your approval — I shall sail with you tonight.'

His inventory proved correct: the passport seemed in good order; the money was good as gold.

'Name your price!' he shouted.

It was not easy to make up my mind about him. My first impression of this spiritual agent was entirely physical. Big men have an advantage over their smaller brothers at the start, for they stun the analytical brain by their very bigness.

'So you're a Dutchman,' I said, still debating the question. 'You haven't much of an accent. . . .'

'Captain *English*' — I definitely disliked the manner in which he pronounced my name — 'God speaks in many tongues!'

'It's odd that you should have waited until the last moment, Dr. Walkes.'

'God's work knows no time other than the present!'

The fog swirled around and between us and drew a veil over his face. The coal-women were departing, half-seen forms melting into an outer rim of darkness. Mr. Stagg, the first mate, was calling my name.

I spoke quickly: 'Of course, this is very irregular, you understand. Accepting at the last moment — without proper investigation — a stranger —'

'A stranger?' thundered the missionary, orotund in voice. 'A minister of the Lord!'

The offer was tempting; funds were low. I accepted. Two wooden packing cases (Bibles) and a trunk, waiting in a nearby cart, were brought on board. One of the crew, in lifting the luggage, lost his hold and roundly cursed the fog. Attempting to gloss over the uncouth speech, such profanity in the presence of a clergyman, I committed an unpardonable blunder.

'This fog is as thick as a Dutchman,' I said.

The Rev. Dr. Raube Walkes looked at me with half-closed eyes and a mocking smile. 'I thought it natural,' he commented, 'for *Englishmen* to feel at home in a fog.'

Then he threw back his head and bellowed with mirth. Most men laugh as if their belts are too tight; Walkes laughed as though he had no clothes on him at all. It was the richest and most pagan laughter I ever heard and he laughed with all his body. I can still hear it ringing in my ears.

And I can still see him, as we unobtrusively slipped out of port, standing in the prow of the vessel, facing a cold breeze that blew in from the sea, an ominous figure, blacker than the night, his greatcoat flapping behind him like the wings of a gigantic bat. . . .

The days that followed were shuffled together like a deck of cards. I find it impossible to conjure for the reader one particular card and force it forward from the rest of the pack. The days faded into each other and blurred into weeks. First it was cold, then it became hot.

I remember little other than that we sailed from Shanghai with Bali our third port, and nothing disturbed the ordered routine but the presence of a passenger on board. In time even the Rev. Dr. Walkes merged into the background and became one with the boat, the sky and the water. Hour upon hour his massive black figure occupied the prow, the white collar gleaming, the leonine head turned upward, the face, crowned by its tawny mane, burned by the sun a fiery red. He looked to us, up in the bridge, as he rose and fell with the undulating swell, like a bold figurehead hewn from the ship's own timber.

I had little occasion to speak with him, except at mealtimes, and even then the conversation was scant. For one thing, his appetite was amazing, and food monopolized his mouth; a silent grace before and after dining was the only limit to his complete disregard for table manners. He would glut and guzzle and shove more food in his boiler than would keep five big men going under full steam for a whole day. When he rested between exertions he occasionally spoke, but then it was never more than a remark about the weather. 'It's hot enough to boil an egg in your pocket,' he might say, mopping his brow. But even this was rare. It was more likely that he would sit tight, breathing audibly, and look up and down the square table, a smug smile of piety on his lips and a bright glint of irony in his eyes. For fear of offending him by my blunt idiom or profane thought, I furtively snubbed him; the officers did likewise; we believed the Dutchman behaved in kind.

Only once did he enter our conversation.

Mr. Stagg, the first mate, a lanky and prematurely bald American, had commented upon our good fortune in quitting the Yangtse-Kiang River without suffering from the ungodly Chinese pirates who prey upon large and small craft alike. We had escaped, he asserted, because the miscreants knew by espionage that we were both well-armed and well-manned. Still, Mr. Stagg could not but deplore that an archaism like piracy should thrive within a few miles of the modern and cosmopolitan city of Shanghai.

The Rev. Dr. Raube Walkes laid down his knife and fork to command the table's attention, which he held by an eloquent eye until he had swallowed his mouthful of food. Then, addressing us all and Mr. Stagg in particular, he said:

'Your discussion of pirates, gentlemen, brings to mind an anec-

dote I read in a very old book. It seems that a captive pirate was being questioned by Alexander the Great as to what right he had to infest the seven seas. "The same that thou hast to infest the universe," the pirate answered, "but because I do this in a small ship, I am called robber; and because thou actest the same part with a great fleet thou art entitled a conqueror!" The same situation exists today between the little pirate and the great industrial Alexanders of Shanghai. Small wonder that they flourish coëvally! Both are the same thing. . . .'

Walkes had not mentioned the Lord's name once. He left it to the first mate to do that.

'Good God!' exclaimed Mr. Stagg, whose bald head grew red as an Easter egg. 'You never read that in the Bible, sir.'

'No,' said the Dutchman, 'I read it in another old book. A book on pirates.'

'It sounds more as if it came from a book on communism,' Mr. Stagg snorted.

'On anarchy,' corrected the second mate, Mr. Bailey, who never passed an opportunity to patronize his superior officer.

'Well, communism or anarchy, it comes to the same thing. There are those that make the laws and those that break 'em. I don't have to tell you that, Bailey.' Having loosed his indignation on the second mate, Mr. Stagg addressed himself to the cause of it. 'I'm amazed at you, sir, a man of the cloth, criticizing civilization that way —'

Rolling his eyes to the ceiling, Walkes's full sensual lips intoned in sing-song: 'To *every thing* there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven.'

'Not to destroy, Dr. Walkes!' interjected Mr. Stagg.

'A time,' the Dutchman continued, without lowering his eyes to the mate's level, 'to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up *that which is planted*.'

'You're talking treason,' cried the first mate.

'Revolution,' corrected Mr. Bailey.

The Rev. Dr. Walkes paused for a second to cock his head in Mr. Stagg's direction, while, with a half-closed eye that was almost a wink, he threw him the following aside: 'Ecclesiastes III-3.' Then quickly back in character, sang on, 'A time to kill, a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up. . . .'

Lo and behold, our missionary was turned prophet! He was obviously talking at cross-purposes with my governmental-minded officers. With considerable relief, I entered the conversation as a peacemaker, piloting our conversation away from political reefs.

'Both you gentlemen misunderstand Dr. Walkes. He speaks from the pulpit, not from the street corner. If I am not mistaken, he advocates righteousness in the cities as well as in the wilderness. A brotherhood of love, isn't that so, sir?'

The Dutchman wiped his oily red face with his napkin, which he began to fold, while apparently formulating a reply. 'Yes, Captain *English*,' he said at last, '*you* might call it that.' This unfortunate habit of accenting certain words, which peppered his speech with a stinging irony, was probably occasioned by his unfamiliarity with a foreign tongue. Nevertheless, it burned a man to hear it. 'And why not? Shanghai could survive piracy no longer than piracy could survive Shanghai... Lord bless us!'

By which he meant that both he and the dinner were concluded. In total confusion, we had not found the words to express our outrage before he had escaped us, hiding his humorous eyes and smiling lips behind a silent grace. There was nothing for us to do but follow his example. We lowered our gaze in emulation. While we sat, itching with impatience and bursting to speak, Walkes pushed his chair back and stalked out of the room.

I could not help pondering upon the character of our passenger to Bali. It is impossible to imagine an imagination greater than our own, or measure a mind larger than ours, but we can recognize them if we are not blinded by egotism. Whereas both Mr. Stagg and Mr. Bailey were intellectual Lilliputians who could see no higher than their highest in command, I held the strategic position between them and Walkes, and knew myself, as compared with this Brobdingnagian minister, a mere man. Nevertheless, because the evil together with the divine are magnified by a larger growth, I wondered whether our giant might not turn out to be a Cyclops. His company oppressed me. By the alacrity of their attack upon him, both mates showed a similar reaction. And then — oh, well; he was too big for his clothes; the clerical collar choked him; his sleeves ended at the wrist bone. My mind provides me with these details though the suit's image has mantled in my memory. Now I see only the vast blot of darkness his black vestments made as, outlined

against the Southern Cross, he stood up in the prow of the boat and cast a substantial shadow over the ship's length.

I began to count the days to Bali. We lay over at the Philippines; then we stopped at Surabaya. Meanwhile our piratical missionary consorted with the crew, a companionship I did not discourage, for by relieving us of his presence it minimized the danger of a second dispute. Moreover, there was an epidemic of surreptitious drinking upon this particular trip, difficult to cope with, and the Kanaka boys, I felt, could only benefit by associating with a man of God. He got on very well with them. He understood their language, and what is more important, their sense of humor. Night after night his rich laughter mingled with theirs; often he joined them in native song. To hear them, one forgot the ringed horizon and fancied oneself in a forest clearing, sitting with savages around a bonfire that cast red lights and black shadows upon the tropical growth. I decided that Raube Walkes was the very modern sort of clergyman, the kind that plays cricket back home, and in practice prides himself like a dentist upon being painless. Yet I could no more picture him batting balls than being in England, or for that matter, in any other place, Holland included. Peculiarly he had made the ship his home.

The night before we arrived at the Port of Bali, our missionary mounted the bridge and broke in upon me. Huge drops of perspiration blistered his red face; his blue eyes shone brighter than usual. He stared at me, blinking as though blinded by the light, and swaying stupidly. I thought he was about to faint. A blood-warm, airless night, a heavy black suit, and a tight collarband were evidently more than even he could bear.

'Captain *English*,' he roared, with an elaborate irony that was a caricature of himself, 'I am a man of God!'

'Are you well, sir?'

'Captain *English*, I would like — the — inestimable privilege — of your help — going ashore —'

'Dr. Walkes, shall I send for water?'

'The Balinese — very ungodly — don't want men of God — worship the Karooga bird — an *eeevil* spirit —'

'Dr. Walkes!'

'I shall *free* them!' he boomed, and fell on his face. As I bent over him, I recognized a familiar odor. The man was drunk.

The next morning we lay off the shallow water of Buealong.

Indolently leaning across the deck's railing, I gazed at the long low coastline. High, slender palms bent beneath the prevailing wind and reflected themselves partly in water and partly on the shining white coral-sands they overcast. A few red Dutch-tiled roofs showed between the green leaves and the blue sky.

There are men who, by contrasting impersonal nature with subjective man, contrive to prove nature cruel and inhuman. Witness how the volcanic force which casts one island above the water's surface will submerge another with all the people and creatures on it. Where now is Atlantis? Whence comes this new uncharted rock? But nature, which is incomprehensible to us, must find us equally incomprehensible. We do by batting an eye what nature can do only by bursting the earth's crust. Who heard of Bali a century ago? Were our grandfathers cognizant of its dark-brown women toiling with bare breasts beneath a burning sun, or its effeminate lounging men who chew the soporific betelnut, spitting its bloody juice upon the white sands, bestowing toothless smiles upon each other with the blackened stumps and black-red gums the betelnut begets? In those days, when Macassar was famed for its hair oil and Victorian dandies spotted their upholstered chairs with Macassar Pomade, England's queen, like the good housewife she was, placed lace doilies where the stains were most prevalent and started a fashion by calling them anti-macassars. Today Macassar is submerged in a hyphenated word, and Bali is the tourists' Mecca. Man, impatient with nature, has proven himself as cruel and ruthless, and in showing his power has made himself her peer.

These reflections were interrupted by a tap on my shoulder. I glanced backward into the Dutchman's face. An impersonal smile buttered his lips; and I fancied that his eyes looked upon me as my eyes had looked on Bali. Instantly I felt that our passenger was responsible for the unwonted course of my thoughts. I waited for him to speak.

'Captain *English*,' he began in his full round voice, 'I am a miserable and repentant sinner. The devil has used me for his own ends. If you can find it in your heart to forgive — and *forget*? — I am sure we can come to an equitable arrangement.'

'Your conduct is no concern of mine, Dr. Walkes.'

'Precisely. Your weren't paid to watch me. But if you are

agreeable I should now like to make my — er — welfare your business.'

So saying, he produced his pin seal wallet and from it drew two hundred dollars, which he placed in my hand.

'What is this for?'

'I am hiring a lifeboat for the brief period of a half hour. To get ashore. . . .'

Evidently the Rev. Dr. Raube Walkes was still drunk. His words made no sense whatever. I decided to stow away his money until such time as he should be a master of it.

Pocketing the bills I replied, 'Very well, sir, as soon as the port authorities have come on board —'

'Immediately!'

'I'm afraid that's impossible.'

'Good God, man, that's what I'm paying you for! If you think I want to wait on your deck until my papers are inspected —'

His red face purpled, and the smile jellied on his lips. He trembled with vehemence.

'Must I explain?' he shouted.

'I understand you well enough, sir,' I answered, and handed the money back to him. 'I prefer not to know the details. I'm as anxious as you to have you off my ship. But if you doubled the bribe, I wouldn't lower a line to save you.'

'Must I *swim* for it?'

I pointed to the government launch which was at that moment coming alongside; and left him without a word.

After a cursory examination of the vessel, Herr Van Matsys of the Port Police, together with the quarantine officer, entered my cabin. Van Matsys was a desiccated individual whose thin little body was a mere string holding his balloon-like head to the earth. His voice had the hollow precision of a phonograph; his abrupt gestures all seemed controlled by invisible wires. He was the perfect sergeant, the ideal echo for an order.

'Captain, you are saying here iss a passenger. What iss diss passenger doing?' he inquired in his squeaky voice.

'A missionary, Herr Van Matsys. Will you examine his papers?'

'A missionary? Ach, so?'

'I'll call him.'

'But here iss not the possibility for a missionary at Bali. Ve are

not having vun here for many years. Dey are causing too much trouble vid de natives. All de world knows diss!’

‘I did not know it, sir. I would not have carried him if I had.’

‘Ach! Perhaps ve can see him?’

The Rev. Dr. Raube Walkes was summoned. His case was now clear. Obviously he was an unbalanced fanatic who had rebelled against the Dutch legal restrictions. The bribe seemed no longer sinister, but fantastic. I began to fear that I must carry him on to a further port.

The missionary’s enormous bulk blocked the doorway and darkened the cabin. His passport was in hand. The mischievous light of one who delights in naughtiness and its attendant confusion twinkled in his eyes. He viewed us with vast entertainment.

A malicious smile inserted the thin end of a wedge between Van Matsys’ lips.

‘Ach, it iss *you!*’ he said.

The following ten minutes was a nightmare. Raube Walkes and Van Matsys leered at each other, each deriving pleasure from the other’s discomfort. Van Matsys declared the passport to be a forgery — ‘ach, and so clever!’ Walkes thanked him with a mock modesty and confessed that it was his own creation and shamelessly requested that it be returned to him for future use. Van Matsys declared dryly that it would be received only in hell, and gave it back. When the little Dutchman had his fill of cat-and-mouse humor, he turned to me and said:

‘Diss gentleman iss not a missionary. But still ve are not wanting him. Sol!’

‘But what is he?’

‘Here iss an international figure, Captain. You haff a famous man on your boat. He iss making trouble first in de vest and now in de east. An *agent provocateur* — what you call an agitator in politics. A propagandist! Ve haff been varned about his presence in de wicity.’

‘But I don’t understand, sir. What does he do? What has he done?’

‘A dangerous revolutionary, Captain! Maybe he iss an anarchist, maybe — Gott iss knowing vhat! But he iss haffing a power over de natiffs. Five t’ousand coolies vere following him from de cotton mills in Wuzih, not two hours from Shanghai, last year. And in

Cebu, he vass leading de Filipinos, in a strike vhat vass closing de port. Now he iss hoping here in Bali — but ve are being too smart for him —!’

‘Then you refuse to accept him?’

‘Ach, it iss sad, but so. He iss very amusing, diss dangerous man.’

‘But what is his name? What is his country? What am I to do with him?’

‘He has many names, he has no country! De Dutch East Indies are closed to him. No doubt all udder possessions haff likewise been varned, and like deir countries are on de lookout for him. I do not know where iss not closed to such a man. I doubt vedder you vill lose him!’

‘But to whom does he belong, Herr Van Matsys? I refuse to be burdened with him.’

‘You haff no choice. Here he iss on diss ship, he belongs to you.’ The little Dutchman coughed up some dry laughter. ‘No vun vill haff vhat is your own responsibility!’

Walkes drowned him out with thunderous laughter.

He roared: ‘Would you turn me into a Flying Dutchman, sir?’

‘Dat iss a good vun! Ha, ha! You vill sail, ha, ha, from now — until — eternity! *Ein Fliegender Holländer*.’

I was aghast at the situation. On my own responsibility I had accepted a man I knew nothing about, who had said he was a missionary, but was some agitator intent upon starting an uprising among the natives of Bali; and who, if Van Matsys was to be believed, had been outlawed by every country on the face of the earth. The forces of law and order, which he disregarded, had shunned him. His character was now clear in the light of his identity. For a moment I almost wished the boat and all on board it at the bottom of the sea.

‘But Herr Van Matsys,’ I said, ‘is there nothing that can be done with him?’

‘I belief our friendt iss being vanted by de Shanghai police. Dere you picked him up and dere you must put him down. It iss your vun chance.’

Walkes and Van Matsys stared at each other pleasantly enough; each understood the other — they represented the opposing forces of law and anarchy. Behind the diminutive inspector stood the whole world of policedom and officialdom and the four billion people

it protects. Raube Walkes stood isolated, self-dependent and impregnable, a natural law unto himself. Here if ever was a collision between the immovable body and the unarrestable force. As such, each respected the other and employed this short truce for a mutual inspection.

'Oh, you are a so clever man,' cried Van Matsys. 'How iss it possible you are coming as a clergyman to Bali? It was wrong.'

'I had no time for shopping, my dear sir. This was the only suit that would fit me.'

Van Matsys smiled sadly.

'Dey are not making clothes big enough to fit you. No, nor countries eider,' he said. Then he shrugged his shoulders, neatly replaced his papers in their portfolio, and departed.

Walkes answered my questioning stare by sitting down in my cabin and filling his pipe with a patient care. He made himself at home.

We left Bali the same day.

That night I called Mr. Stagg and Mr. Bailey into my cabin and held counsel upon what plan would be best to pursue. We stood up, supporting ourselves without the help of furniture or walls, for the heat was so heavy that when you put your hand on a table it was wet when you picked it up. Both mates were furious at the unjustifiable imposition that had been laid upon us. For once they agreed. Raube Walkes was the most unprincipled of villains, unbearable and unpardonable, a jinx, a hoodoo, a veritable Jonah who should be thrown to the whales. Yet Mr. Stagg would be *darned*, and Mr. Bailey (just to be different) would be *blessed*, if either one knew what to do. We finally decided that, considering the poor state of the ship's finances, we would not alter our course, but continue trading, and endeavor meanwhile to part with our unwelcome passenger at every port. If we found this impossible, then willy-nilly we would carry the beggar back with us to Shanghai where he would meet with his proper fate. Shanghai was six thousand miles off by the *Roundabout's* route, about three months sailing. For the rest we would steer by the compass and hope by the stars.

The first seven days were a week of Doomsdays. Then a second port refused our passenger; and a third, a fourth and a fifth followed precedent. Our ship was received at dock with derisive smiles and

sardonic laughter; the story flew like a screaming gull before our mast; one official thanked us with an open sarcasm for ridding the world of a dangerous revolutionary, the most undesirable of its inhabitants. *Der Fliegender Holländer* — The Flying Dutchman — was a label fit to catch the public fancy, and it was enthusiastically employed by the white and brown population who clamored to see him. As for Raube Walkes, when we were within sight of land he neither hid nor exhibited himself, but conspicuous in his clerical black-and-white, paced the deck with a lively step and a curiosity as vivacious as that of the sight-seekers.

He never attempted to escape, although God knows, we gave him every opportunity! I think he enjoyed being in the world's eye and probably hoped that in time he would become a *cause célèbre*. Perhaps that had been his purpose from the first: I have not the faintest, foggiest notion. One may associate with a man without knowing him. It is one thing to sound a man's character, another — more difficult — to fathom his thoughts. Our Dr. Walkes seemed that paradox, a profound actor.

It is impossible to say when or how, but slowly, imperceptibly, our passenger came to take possession of the ship and all its crew. The Kanaka boys, with whom he continued to mix exclusively, were the first to fall under his spell. They loved him with an almost female devotion and treated him, not as a brown man treats a white one, but as one of them, yet their superior. The nearest English equivalent for the name they gave him in their ungodly language is *Captain*. Also, inevitably, as he filled the officers' minds, he ousted all their other thoughts until he possessed them by their very hatred of him. Certainly every port for which I headed (and Shanghai at the end) was a destination, not so much for the crew and cargo, as for our bogus Dutchman. We felt the restrictions of our forced association far more than he; we were his prisoners, not he ours. When, at Mr. Stagg's suggestion, a concerted plan was attempted to put Walkes into coventry at dinner time, Walkes — without opening his mouth except to eat, or closing it except to smile — silenced the entire table. He all but emptied our cupboard with his Gargantuan appetite. And it was for him the Kanaka boys sang at their work, and I stood at the wheel, and our native cook concocted his most succulent mess.

Meanwhile Walkes never changed his costume. His white collar

was wilted and smudged; his black serge was ruined by spots as diversified as soup and oil. Coat buttons were missing here and there. But he continued to play the clergyman. He read. He smoked. He paced the deck as though it were his own property. Even when he stood for hours in the prow of the boat, time did not hang heavy on his hands, but seemed to pass through him for his own special use. The nights he spent in company with the crew, singing with them in his rich voice, amusing them by feats of strength and jokes at which his pagan laughter rang out louder than the rest. There was considerable drinking, the source of which we were unable to discover. Undoubtedly the deck hands treated him out of their hidden store. In any case, Raube Walkes was as blasphemous a picture as anyone could see, liquored every night and a demoralizing influence in the bargain.

Mr. Stagg advised me to put our man in solitary confinement. He declared that the engineer had spied Walkes playing at certain animalistic practices with the Kanaka boys. The engineer later denied it, and I was given no proof, for which I was grateful. I was not blinded to the possibilities of what might happen if I jailed him. I wanted no Samson in chains.

It occurred to me, as I lay in my cabin one sultry morning, to examine the two packing cases which our passenger had brought with him on board, claiming that they contained Bibles for distribution in Bali. They were brought up on deck and opened. One was filled with anarchistic pamphlets. The other, now half empty, held enough whiskey to float a launch. Here was the fountain and origin of dissipation which had puzzled us for two months. I threw the bottles over the stern one by one. Then I dumped the papers after them; but an inopportune breeze caught these up and carried them high in the air, flapping like wild snowy birds; many were blown backward and either alighted in the rigging or were distributed about the deck. Walkes, far from being angered, laughed boisterously as we ran after the pamphlets. These had to be gathered again and disposed of for good.

After that first week of awful impatience we grew resigned — you get used to hanging if you hang long enough — and each day became its own eternity. This can happen at sea, where the circular horizon moves on with the ship, and no thing stands to mark its

passing. Time remains static where no greater confusion of people is possible, no change in physical properties is permitted. Day follows night. The sun that rises in the east sets in the west. The north wind blows south, the south north, the east west, and the west east; so it is all around the compass. And the *Roundabout*, an infinitesimally tiny speck creeping over the earth's wet circumference, turned north to China.

The days grew colder.

Mr. Walkes again appeared on deck in his greatcoat. Clouds of pipe smoke blew over his shoulder and trailed behind him. When the wind became stronger he covered the burning bowl with an asbestos hand. He clung to his pipe even after it refused to fire and the bluish smoke that followed him was his own frozen breath.

The constellations changed. The Southern Cross sank as the Northern Cross ascended.

The water turned from blue to green and finally to yellow as we touched the Yangtse-Kiang.

We kept a constant look-out for river pirates, but no unpleasant event interfered with the placidity of our course. Our spirits buoyed as the boat approached its port. I think we felt that the very ship would rise ten feet once relieved of its passenger's weight.

Only Raube Walkes, patiently trodding the deck as if we were ten miles from nowhere, took no part in the prevalent high spirits.

Breaking the silence of weeks I said with an ill-concealed triumph: 'Mr. Walkes! Do you realize that we cast anchor in an hour? Are you packed and ready?'

'No. I'm not packed,' he said, scrutinizing me with clear blue eyes which would have been diabolic had they not been surrounded by benevolent wrinkles.

'There won't be much time, you know. You'll be getting off here. Don't look for any difficulties with the authorities in Shanghai. They'll be glad to see you.'

'Will they, do you think?'

'I'm sure of it!'

Now that our trip together was at an end, I started to laugh from sheer relief, and he laughed with me. I had no idea about what he was laughing, but his very laughter made me laugh all the more. I almost forgot my antipathy for him in our mutual mirth!

But, two hours later, the Shanghai port police had denied Raube

Walkes permission to enter the country. Apparently advised by radio of his approach, they possessed the particulars of his peculiar case: and though Shanghai wanted him, China did not. Yes, he would be imprisoned if he put foot on land, but no, he was not to be given the opportunity. This saved the government a complicated legal procedure that might prove embarrassing, and likewise dispensed with the nuisance of providing for him. In prison or out the man was undesirable. They commiserated with me upon my misfortune, but could suggest no other course than application to the British consul for help. In any case, so long as the *Roundabout* lingered in port, Raube Walkes must be confined to chains.

So Mr. Stagg was gratified at last. But I am sure he realized, as he turned the key upon our captive with his own fingers, the futility of his plan. No wonder the culprit succumbed to imprisonment with such smug complacency! If he was at one end of the chain, we were at the other. The lock was his safeguard.

I left the ship in charge of her officers and set out at once for the British consulate. Mr. Herbert Chisholm, then consul, whose advice I had sought upon two or three past occasions, was occupied. Would I mind waiting? Each minute that passed, instead of composing me, saw my excitement increase. An hour later I entered the consul's office as flustered as if I had run to keep my appointment.

Mr. Chisholm greeted me affably and rose to give me his hand. He was a tall, bony man with a long aquiline nose and a black mustache: a grave countenance that now and again was contradicted by his quick boyish grin. One might call him middle-aged if that nondescript term did not imply being either ridiculously young or pathetically old. Mr. Herbert Chisholm was neither.

Without more ado I told him my story.

When I had finished he rubbed his nose with a long big-knuckled finger and chuckled to himself.

'I know the man well, Captain,' he murmured, 'I'm afraid that your famous passenger is a man without a country. There isn't much we can do for him. There isn't anything.'

'But is there nothing to be done for *me*, Mr. Chisholm? Am I expected to sail him around the world all the rest of my days?'

'It looks that way, doesn't it?'

'By God, sir, I'd scuttle the ship first!'

'Not a bad idea,' he said, his gravity transformed into a grin.

'I had hoped that at least you, Mr. Chisholm — at least *you* —'

'Remember this, Captain. The man you have on your ship carries no passport and is claimed by no country. Legally he doesn't exist. He's a myth. As such, no flag protects him. He has no rights. If he were suddenly to disappear, no questions would be asked. Do you follow me?'

I nodded. Mr. Herbert Chisholm stood up and looked at me down one side of his long nose.

'Even if he were to die. . . .'

What was he saying? His hand was upon my shoulder, his lips near my ear.

'If I were in your shoes, Captain,' he was whispering, 'I'd go for a walk with him on some dark night — around the deck — and talk, you know, talk — keep on talking to him — until you come to the railing's end — and then —'

I turned my head to face him. His eyes were as close to mine as yours are to this page. I could no more believe my eyes than you can yours.

'But that's murder!'

'I fail to see how you can murder a man who doesn't exist.'

'He does exist! That's what none of you seem to realize! He's a man the same as you and I!'

'He might commit *suicide*, you know.' The grin that suddenly illuminated his grave features filled me with fear. It came like a beacon flash, cutting through darkness, indicating the proximity of a perilous reef and as suddenly it had disappeared.

'It might be regarded as your patriotic duty. . . .'

The interview was at an end.

When the *Roundabout* again weighed anchor, a second time bound for Bali, Raube Walkes was still on board. Mr. Stagg, Mr. Bailey, the engineer and myself went about our tasks sullenly, silently, as though this were the ship's last trip. We moved down the river without mishap. Our prisoner was put at liberty, which meant he could walk a hundred paces back and forth. In his clergyman's suit and flapping greatcoat he occupied the prow; and we never could look ahead but we saw his figure looming before us. Thus we passed with the river out to sea.

That night the boat began to roll.

Crouched amid the brown-skin boys in the forecabin, Raube Walkes crooned with them, accompanied by the steady beat of bare palms on the floorboards. Their monotone, climbing and falling as it carried, now muffled and now clear, came and went with the wind. It was upsetting that a white man should join in such mumbo-jumbo. Their song had an ominous note that belonged to the threatening ocean and I wondered over its meaning. If they were seeking to pacify the elements they certainly sang in a language the sea could understand; they sounded as hostile and savage as the night itself.

The barometer fell.

Realizing that we were in for a blow, we headed the boat out to sea; it was near the end of the typhoon season and we were taking no chances. A wise fisherman knows that the shark's tail is more dangerous than his head.

Mr. Stagg, leaving the wheel in charge of Mr. Bailey, made a brief call in my cabin.

'That's an ungodly noise they're making up there,' he said, pointing with his crooked thumb to the forecabin.

'I know. Walkes is in it.'

'He would be, wouldn't he?' said the American. He scratched his bald head as though it had hair on it. 'Tell me, sir, what's to be done with him?'

I threw up my hands.

'I've been thinking a good bit about it,' he went on, 'these last few days. I've got an idea —'

'What is it?'

'Well, I don't know how to say it... Hell, why not? What's to keep us from giving him a lifeboat and some food and setting him adrift?'

'He'd starve to death.'

'But we wouldn't be there to see it, would we?'

'No, that's impossible. It's inhuman.'

'I suppose you'd sooner see him drown. Kinder, eh?' Hatred counterfeited humor in his eye.

'Drown?'

'Why not, sir? It's a dark night, isn't it? If a man fell overboard tonight —'

Was the continual whisper in my ear so loud then that another

could hear it? Four days now Mr. Chisholm's voice had blown like a foghorn through my brain. It was so easy. Who would know? Who could blame me? There was nothing cruel about it. It was not like cutting him adrift, sending him to a death of thirst, seeing him die with dry lips and sunken eyes. There would be water, plenty of it. A quick push —

Outside the waves were scrapping together like a menagerie let loose, to which the wind lent a hue and cry.

'Well,' Mr. Stagg was saying, 'we can't carry him from now until the Day of Judgment. If he were on land, the law would do it for us. You're the law at sea —'

'It's out of the question.'

'You couldn't call it *murder*, Captain —'

'I refuse to discuss it.'

'Think of him, sir. Do you think it will be pleasant for him to spend the rest of his life at sea? Never put his foot on land? Have you thought of that?'

'I've thought of it. I don't want to think of it.'

I have no desire to excuse or explain my final decision. Constructing a sound case for myself, it would be only too easy to say: that it had twice been recommended to me as the logical course; it was my patriotic duty; the law approved; my patience had consumed itself; I was temporarily deranged by the prospect of a never-ending sentence, etc. If killing is justifiable, then I was justified. But then as now, I considered it murder, and there is no excuse for that. Nor will I attempt to describe the mental processes which predicate such mad behavior. They belong to those states of indescribable pain so dreadful, that our minds are forced to bury them in oblivion. I do not remember, and I cannot now imagine, the condition of mind that makes murder plausible. All I can do is set down the facts as they occurred.

Once out on the deck, surrounded by darkness and sprayed by a cold, wet wind, I collided with the engineer.

'Hullo, there!' he cried. 'It's a black night —'

It seemed as though the whole world, man and nature, had conspired to make the crime possible and was coaxing me to it. The night's darkness was concentrated on our ship. Beneath a turbulent mass of black clouds which blotted out the moon, the sea surged like boiling pitch. Waves leapt hungrily up to the deck.

I walked to the railing and looked down into the water; when I turned around, Raube Walkes was standing by my side.

Even *he* seemed to urge me on. . . .

'What do you want?' I asked him. My voice was hoarse.

The odor of whiskey met me before he opened his mouth. 'Captain *English*,' he began, couching the words in his inevitable smile, 'I want to speak with you.'

I stared at his lion-like head with disbelief. His square chin was sunk in his coat-collar; the mane of tawny hair was flying wild; his blue eyes gleamed in the darkness as though phosphorescent.

'I don't want to talk to you!' I cried.

'But I insist,' he answered smoothly, linking his arm in mine. 'Shall we take a turn about the deck?'

He started off and I went with him, hypnotized into obedience, drawn forward as in a dream of wish-fulfillment, lured by my victim to his own destruction. After we had promenaded for a time — I ran to keep pace with him — he paused.

In the oratorical voice which doubtless he considered the ideal vehicle for irony, he boomed: 'Captain *English*, I am a very sensitive man. Though you have done your best to conceal a certain animosity which you — perhaps not unnaturally — bear toward me, my allergic perceptivity has made me conscious of it. Will you oblige me, sir, by informing me what has occasioned this feeling of conflict and hostility in your breast?'

His flowery speech nauseated me. The hypocrisy could not even be condoned by deception. It was guying, not guile. My gorge rose.

'You tricked me into accepting you on this boat, knowing very well what would happen if you were apprehended!'

'But the animosity began long before you knew me for the consummate villain I am.'

'You've had a demoralizing influence on the whole crew. Your drunkenness, your liquor!'

'Before that, sir! It began before that!'

'Your ideas!'

'Captain *English*, think back. Certainly it began even before I attempted to corrupt you with my — er — ideas?'

'It began —'

'Yes?'

'The night I picked you up off the wharf, sir! I suffered a physical revulsion the moment I laid eyes on you. I found my reasons later. That night, Mr. Walkes, I disliked you without cause.'

'Thank you!' The thunder subsided from his voice; it became soft and insinuating. 'You disliked me before you knew anything about me. Then you must have disliked me for some reason within yourself. Perhaps you do right to blame me for making you conscious of it.'

My eyes drifted away from him, seeking some object to focus upon, anything to occupy my mind and divert it from the course of his speech. Then I saw that he had stopped at the railing's end and only this solitary figure of Walkes was between myself and the sea! Oddly, this seemed not the reality, but another rehearsal of the plotting imagination, different from a hundred scenes like it which had already filled my mind, only in that this was the more dreamlike: it was *he* who had suggested our walk, *he* who had paused at its destination, and *he* who talked — went on talking — while it was *I* who listened to him!

'You hold me responsible for the undesired linking of our lives. It is you who are to blame, Captain *English*, you and the world you stand for. If man were free and a law unto himself, such a situation as this could never have arisen. It is the world of laws and orders — your world — that has occasioned it. For two thousand years the strong have been sacrificed to the weak, and with what result? To imprison the strong, the weak have imprisoned themselves. They have constructed a great cage of government and jurisdiction and everyone, giants and pygmies alike, have been incarcerated in it. And there are cages within cages! If one man is strong enough to escape from that labyrinth of bars and locks and view imprisoned mankind like animals in a zoo, it is more than they can bear. A great howl is set up. They will spare neither effort nor expense to recapture the truant and if possible, destroy him. And do you know why, Captain *English*? Because he has destroyed their illusion of freedom within limits, he had broken the bounds and betrayed them to themselves. Captain *English*, that is why you abominate me. Because I know none of your hampering traditions, your congenital fears, your inherited weakness! Because your *God* is not mine, and my *nature* is not yours! Realize what you mean when you call me primitive and yourself civilized! This boat is your world, Captain *English* —'

The waves were now leaping on the deck itself. The wind was rising. Walkes shouted to be heard.

'The difference between us is that I break laws as naturally as you obey them,' he went on. 'If our positions were transposed, do you think I would hesitate for a minute? I would do what you are contemplating! I would act!'

Which I was suddenly about to do, putting my hand forward clumsily like a blind man seeking light, wanting to push my way to freedom. Over he must go, that was it. Over —

Raube Walkes grasped my wrist with his left hand and such was his strength that he flung me down on my knees at his feet. My arm went numb. I felt only the cold water running on the deck; and I floundered in it as if I were at the bottom of the sea.

'Coward!' he roared. 'You were not strong enough! This ship is mine! *I'll never leave it!*'

Laughing uproariously, he threw my arm back at me.

'I give you back your life. It would die with your conscience. You would never have survived me.'

Suddenly it seemed that the four winds had converged upon the ship. Creaking and screaming, it rose like the roof of a house in a hurricane. Then we fell endlessly. Tons of black water poured in over us. The storm had started.

'We're in for it!' howled Walkes.

His cry released my locked joints and restored me to a semblance of life and activity. I stood on my feet. I took command. I was away from Walkes and everywhere at once. There was a boat at sea, laboring through a bursting ocean, and I was captain of it. There are times when only the fear of losing his life is sufficient to save a man from losing his mind. The natural course of events that calls for a disaster can be diverted only by the accidental occurrence of a catastrophe. As such, the storm proved my salvation.

The wind blew so ferociously that it ceased to be air and became solid. It attacked the ship's flanks with a battering ram, twisted the iron spars, broke the chains of the deck cargo, collapsed the lifeboats as if they were sea shells; it shrieked like a bat being murdered, and bellowed like a mad bull, gave voice to every cry that the brain can receive between life and death. This was no longer the gentle air of which we are so confident, which we breathe and becomes a part of us — this was the wind that gave voice to Walkes. It annihilated

the ocean's surface; wind and water mingled. We vomited the salt water from our lungs. There were times when, whether we floated or whether we had sunk, we could not tell. Down we would go, slowly down, the water moiling before our eyes, our heartbeats muffled in our ears, our breath gone; down as a minute flowed by and more. Then the ship would groan in labor, shivering with strain, and the engines would burst out as though the ship's very groin were ruptured. And up — up! Out of the boiling water we flew, followed by an ear-splitting noise, heart-rending, a screaming mechanical grind that went through us like a dentist's drill, as our propeller cleared the surface and whirled in the air. We would feel the sound in our teeth. And then down again.

The ship rolled on her side, all the way over, until we thought she had turned upside down. A mute conflict ensued between the boat and the sea, each pulling, the ship holding this incredible position with calamity in the balance. Each time I thought would be her last. But slowly she would right herself and swing ponderously to the other side. The planks groaned with the shuddering of her frame. Once she stood up on end. We clung to ropes, bars and timbers, swinging in space, until the fury had spent its erection and ejected us back into the sea.

But the most unforgettable moment of that hideous night occurred when the black clouds quietly parted overhead and from between them emerged a full moon placidly sailing in the sky. It cast a pallid light on the hellish turbulence below, the colliding mountains of water and the impending peril of each dark precipice that rose up before us. By revealing the storm in its nakedness it proved our imaginations stunted, for our worst fears had pictured no panorama so vast and horrifying as the actuality. Cool and impersonal, the moon soared high above, mocking us with its aloof serenity. There was no sound in heaven; on earth the wind and fury. It was the most ironical sight I ever beheld.

Walkes was standing beside me. I had forgotten him in the confusion and danger, and started when I realized who he was. Was I never to lose him? Had he followed me about, I wondered, shadowing me even in darkness? His face was streaming with water and his wet hair plastered his wide forehead like a wig. The cold mocking light of the moon illumined the sardonic smile on his lips. Then he shouted something to me which I could not hear.

An attempt to shout down the wind could be invoked only by words of vast importance, something upon which our immediate salvation depended. I knew that, no matter how, I must hear him. But although I bent toward him as far as I could without releasing my hold on the cabin door, and struggled to catch his meaning, I was unable to capture a fragment of what he said.

He was shouting. I could tell that from the way the veins swelled on his forehead and stood out from his throat. His open mouth was running with sea water, but the wind blew his words back and all but choked him. I could hear nothing . . . only the screaming gale and the roaring water. . . .

That, and then a world of water crashed down upon our heads and we sank under with the ship. When it rolled off, Walkes was gone.

Somehow I managed to mount the bridge.

Mr. Bailey was holding the wheel with all his might, but every ounce of his strength could not restrain it from swinging, now to the left and now right, nearly breaking his wrist with each revolution. Fatigued as I was, I fell upon the handle bars and added my own puny efforts to his. The wheel remained stationary for a moment, and then, despite the weight and combined bracing of our bodies, it again began to turn. We were forced to climb the bars hand over hand like monkeys in a revolving cage. For all that we could do, the rudder was turning the wheel, the sea navigating the boat.

I saw Mr. Bailey's lips frame the single word:

'Rope!'

If the wheel were not lashed the ship would go spinning like a match in a maelstrom. But there was no rope. And if either of us released his restraining hold, the other would be killed by the sudden resultant revolution. All we could do was to grip the bars grimly, the hold of a mongoose on a cobra's throat, held by the wheel as fast as we held it.

A sudden calm ensued, and the ocean became miraculously quiet. Neither sound nor movement betrayed a breath left in the storm. Beguiled by the false tranquillity, we relaxed our feverish tension and balanced the wheel with the weight of our limp bodies.

With a crash like thunder, the wind, having redoubled its fury, burst upon the ship. The wheel spun, flung us up into the air, up and away. I struck the cabin wall and fell unconscious. And now I

was dreaming about a storm at sea, the wind and the waves, and an overwhelming wheel spinning madly. . . . My eyes opened and after a minute's wrestling with reality I awoke. Mr. Bailey's body, crumpled in unnatural angles, lay huddled in a corner. The indomitable wheel spun around, this way and that, death to approach.

I started down to the deck, shouting: 'The wheel! . . . The wheel!'

No one heard me. The *Roundabout* was shrieking in a death agony, turned and tortured by the waves. Her life was a matter of minutes. With an uncontrollable rudder she would drive herself down into the deep.

A sudden convulsion of the boat catapulted me into Mr. Stagg and two native boys crouching beside him. The four of us went sprawling. At last I managed to make them hear.

'She'll capsize!' I screamed. They nodded to me. They understood.

They struggled back with me up the steep steps to the bridge, and viewed the maniacal wheel with eyes aghast. It whirled at such a rate that we beheld only its blurred outline. For an instant it would stop and then spin back in the other direction. It had a diabolic mind of its own, intent upon our destruction, and we danced about it like idiots.

A great wave smote the walls and broke in the door and descended upon us. As the ship raised her shoulders above the sea, and the water washed out, we saw looming in the doorway an immense man. With the salt water running down him, dripping from his face and fingers, Raube Walkes might have risen from the sea itself. In an instant his quick eyes had encompassed the unpossessed wheel, those who pranced impotently about it and the crumpled figure of Mr. Bailey on the floor.

'Out of the way!' he bellowed.

We obeyed his order and retreated to the walls. He cast himself forward, turning about as he went, and charged the wheel with his back. There was a crash and a cracking sound: the wooden spokes had splintered. Like Axion with a wheel upon his back, Raube Walkes caught the ship in its course. He bent beneath the terrific force. Slowly the wheel, with the ocean's weight behind it, ground him down. The bones showed through his red face in white blotches. He sank upon one knee heavily.

He raised his head with difficulty and his bloodshot eyes sought

mine. I shall never forget his expression then. Effort entrenched itself in deep lines there as it fought with pain. His lips twitched as they were pulled now by courage and again by despair. The skin grew white as death. And then a sudden and incredible smile — like lightning in winter — flashed across his face. It unclosed a row of clenched teeth, but it was a smile and his very eyes shone with it.

'My . . . collar . . .' he grunted.

I understood. When I had ripped off the clerical band that was choking him and bared his bullish throat, the cords and tendons of which stood out like a ship's rigging, he sighed with relief and rewarded me with such a smile as Christ must have given for a drink of water.

We joined him in his effort, but our strength was no more than an emanation of his. It was a half hour before the wheel could be lashed, and by then the storm had spent its fury. And such had been the Herculean strength of his determined will, that — because neither the man nor the ocean would give, but each grimly held out against the other — the rudder broke beneath the strain.

Next morning we took toll of the havoc.

Through heaving silvery water and swirling fog, the *Roundabout* drifted aimlessly. Listing thirty degrees to starboard, the ship was wrecked and mangled beyond recognition, a corpse floating face upward. All but two lifeboats were stoved in or gone. Four Kanaka boys had been washed overboard; others had broken limbs; none was without a bruise of one kind or another. Mr. Bailey was dead. I took our bearings. We were barely two hundred miles off the coast of China.

After a brief consultation with Mr. Stagg, I decided that — considering we had no wireless (a crew of under thirty does not legally require one) through which to effect our rescue, and the *Roundabout*, past control or repair, might sink before she was sighted by another vessel — it was best to abandon ship; and I gave orders for the lifeboats to be lowered. At that, one of them leaked badly, but with bailing it would do — it would have to do. Good navigation should pull us through the choppy swell without too great peril.

Once again, and for the last time, I was faced with the problem of my *Doppelgänger*, Mr. Walkes. Since the preceding night, when our lives had been saved by his heroic intervention, any disposal of him

was further complicated by the gratitude I felt, or knew that I should have felt, for what he had done. *Now* what was I to do? Carry him along with us or desert him on a sinking ship? The world's opinion, weighted by my own distaste, advised me to abandon him: he was a social leper, depraved beyond redemption, dangerous whether at loose or imprisoned in a penal colony. Duty, dictated by justice, was clear. But the other alternative, bolstered by my guilt in lacking gratitude, committed me to saving his life regardless of the cost. However, even the punishment was equivocal. The ship might drift her way to safety and the lifeboats founder; both might disappear in her hazardous course; both might find a destination.

If only I did not hate him so! Inversely, I tried to substantiate my hatred rather than establish a reasonable basis for friendliness. Why had he brought help to men he despised? Because he could not preserve his own life without saving ours, that was obvious, simple. So might a soldier, under fire, crouch and protect the body lice which infested him, rescue them from a common death, only to destroy them when the danger was past.

The first mate was awaiting my decision.

'Mr. Stagg, I'm going to take your advice after all,' I told him. 'Mr. Walkes will be given a boat, some food, and be set adrift.'

Mr. Stagg returned my wry smile with a sullen stare. I marvelled to see how easily he hated our passenger, hated him beyond question or consideration, no less this morning than he had prior to the storm. That passionate loathing which blinds us more than love and is even more lasting, had made a permanent home within him.

'But,' I added, 'there was one thing you didn't foresee last night. The boat we're giving him is the one we're on. The *Roundabout*. We're taking to the lifeboats without him!'

'That ought to hold him, sir. The ship wasn't big enough with him and the rest of us on board.' The American coughed up some wry laughter and spat on the slanting deck. 'It ought to hold him for a while — anyway —' He winked at me and walked away.

Suddenly, feeling fled before fact, and the whole situation became irresistibly funny. A captain and his crew, saddled with an undesirable passenger, after having endeavored by every possible means to rid themselves of this human parasite, turn the tables on him, and leave him alone on the boat that they have been unable to make him

leave. It was magnificent! I could see the comedy being enacted ten minutes before the curtain arose. Mr. Walkes's fallen mouth and wide eyes would spell the disappointment of a baby Gargantua, huge proportions making his impotence appear all the more helpless; while the Kanaka boys, his only friends on board, would be scrambling over the railing and down the ropes like monkeys — no, like rats deserting a doomed vessel. Then, when we had pushed off, Mr. Walkes would bellow and shake his fist at us, no longer terrible, but mildly grotesque like a giant in a fairy tale. I only hoped that he would not spoil the scene by stepping out of character, by breaking down at the end, to plead, to snivel, to beg. . . .

I went to my cabin for the last time. Oddly, I felt no sorrow in leaving it forever. The wreck was a bad business, of course; but the ship was insured, and I stood to lose little in a financial way. Sentimental regrets, such as saying good-bye to four walls that had housed me so long, a bed which had given me sleep, a table at which I had worked, were annihilated by the state of destruction wreaked by the wash and blow of wave and wind. The room looked strange and hostile. I felt as though I had never lived in it. For some minutes I hesitated amid the wreckage, wondering what to salvage, what I would require during the journey and what I would desire to keep after that. Then I made a bundle of my account book, the log, a few instruments, a chart or two, what money I possessed, and finally — God knows why! — a Bible. Inexplicably, it occurred to me that I should carry a change of shirt, but I dismissed the idea as ludicrous. I was half way through the door before I returned for my revolver. At least, that was practicable. It was impossible to foretell what our reception would be on shore, where many of the coast villages were buzzing pirate hives, and a loaded pistol was as necessary as bread and water.

The boats were already being filled when I came out of the cabin. Seven boys, besides the first mate and the engineer, were in the better boat. Five were bailing the leaking one. The four remaining Kanakas, who would come with me, still lingered on deck, gazing about them with a calm aimless disinterest which not even disaster could direct or organize. As I approached, they stared now at me, then at Walkes, their idle curiosity expressive of unconcern and amusement.

'Mr. Walkes!' I said.

'At your service, sir,' he replied with elaborate affectation of courtesy.

'I have some unpleasant news for you,' I began.

As the big man looked down at me, his blue eyes, vibrant in the gray mist, showed the same serene indulgence apparent in the natives' gaze. I suddenly understood why judges used to put their heads in a black hood before they condemned a man to death. Words would not come while he continued to look at me. This, the hour of my triumph, was harder to bear than all my long days of defeat and frustration. In an effort to realize a sense of personal victory, I forced myself to remember the many humiliations to which he had subjected me, his brazen deceptions, his trouble-making, his delight in my helplessness, the ruthlessness with which he had thrown me down on my own deck.

'This boat is yours,' I said, 'and I'm afraid you'll never leave it.' The words were out of my mouth before I recognized them as his; and Mr. Walkes, hearing them, burst into a belly-laugh which blew them up to the sky. Was triumph his as well as defeat? I stood small before him in my victory.

'Splendid, Captain *English!*' he roared. 'I didn't think you could do it! So the *Roundabout's* mine, is it? Thank you, sir! Thank you.'

'You're welcome to her, Mr. Walkes,' I said rapidly, hoping to conclude the business as soon as possible and put an end to his unbelievable effrontery. 'I think you'll be safe here — for a while. And there'll be food enough — even for you. We can't take more than our boats will hold. You're welcome to anything you find, anything. I wish you a very pleasant journey — wherever you're going —'

'The same to you, sir!' he broke in, chuckling.

'I think that should be all. Goodbye, Mr. Walkes.' I turned away without offering him my hand. Then, to the Kanakas who dawdled about like children while their parents talk, I said: 'Into the boat.'

A hurried colloquy in whispers took place among them. Impatient to push off, not that I feared the ship would sink under us, but because I was anxious to put the sea between Walkes and myself, I repeated my order more sharply than at first. I was not in the mood for trifling. One of the boys stepped away from the others,

and addressed Walkes with two or three syllables in a foreign tongue; Walkes nodded his head abruptly.

'Well?' I shouted. 'Are you coming or do you want me to leave you?'

'Yes. That's it,' said our passenger. 'They want you to leave them.' He spoke with a genial gusto, a simplicity and lack of ostentation which was strange to his lips. I paid no attention to him.

'Is it true?' I asked the four boys.

One of them nodded. Despite their refusal to obey me, they continued to show in their eyes a docility and friendly amusement that, considering their pig-headed obstinacy, maddened me.

'You fools!' I cried. 'Do you want to drown?'

'They want to stay with me,' said Walkes.

'Stay with you!' I echoed. Stay with him? His statement meant nothing to me, so incomprehensible was the thought it implied. Slowly, the truth measured itself in my mind. Not content with having bested me physically and mentally, but now spiritually, without lifting his voice or raising a hand, he was throwing me again, wrestling from me in the presence of my crew what little victory I had won.

'I'll be damned if they do!' I was yelling. In an instant I had my revolver out, and covered the five of them. 'Stand back, Mr. Walkes!' My hand trembled so that I nearly shot him while ordering him out of the line of fire. He made no move. 'Mr. Walkes, stand back!' I repeated. He remained as still as a statue; instead, the boys moved, grouped themselves around him, their half-naked, glistening bodies leaning toward the heroic central figure, oddly, in their silence and composure, like a sculpture of some pagan deity and his followers.

'Very well, Mr. Walkes. Stay where you are and take the consequences. I have no intention of leaving these men at your disposal. If they disobey me again, I'll shoot,' I said.

'Why?'

'There's no need to explain the duty of a captain in case of mutiny—'

'Mutiny, d'you call this? You're wrong, Captain *English*; it's suicide!'

'Into the boat!' I ordered.

No sound answered me except the splashing of the sea. A cold

wind blew through my hair. I felt isolated, alone on the ocean, bound to solitude by the horizon around us. Then I saw Raube Walkes's lips slowly widen and expand — where had I seen that smile? Suddenly I remembered it. It was the smile which had burst like lightning from under the unendurable wheel. . . . For the first time since that night on the dock at Shanghai, I grew embarrassed, as I always do in a clergyman's presence; and I blushed like a child: once again his gaze overpowered me.

As I pocketed the revolver, I realized that our struggle had been destined to end as it did, beyond either victory or defeat, life or death. There was nothing I could do, nothing I would not do —

'I would move heaven and earth —' I began.

'Heaven and earth will stay where they are, sir,' the big man cut in. 'And so will I.'

Mr. Stagg was calling me.

Raube Walkes looked over the railing at our frail leaking craft, still smiling, watching us, as he buttoned his incredibly soiled, bell-shaped clerical coat.

It occurred to me, while climbing down into the boat, that he would require some instrument to determine his bearings. Consequently, I held out the sextant which I carried beneath my arm, and said: 'You'll need this, Mr. Walkes.'

'Not I, Captain!' he shouted down at us. 'Keep it yourself! I'll shoot the sun and stars with more than a sextant before I die! . . . Get along, sir! We'll be meeting again soon enough.'

We pushed off with no other sound than the movement of our oars. Walkes followed us around on the deck and finally lifted his hand and waved. We moved apart. As the loom of the great hull grew shadowy, only a little heavier and darker than the enveloping whiteness, Walkes's colossal figure surrounded by his crouching Kanakas — like a ghostly apparition — appeared to dwarf the vessel. The *Roundabout* rose gradually out of the black-and-silver water, a demon ship, and heaved to in mid-air as though awaiting a message. Then the spectral hulk dilated in the fog and faded on the horizon like sea-mist in the morning sun.

We could see nothing but our own strained faces dimly in the milky light.

THE CRUSADER¹

By WILLIAM SAROYAN

(From *Scribner's Magazine*)

THE small Greek with the false teeth and the sick eyes was luckiest of all, and gamest, and the marbles acted well for him, stacking up a high score every time. He talked to himself in Greek, a few words in English like *God damn*, and *Jesus Christ*. He wasn't a shipper of grapes or a real estate man or a broker like the other men who played the game: he was a Greek gambler, high-strung, reckless, and at the same time cautious. The game was for two dollars, against one other player, or two, or even three or four, just so they played quickly. The Greek couldn't tolerate any player who didn't play quickly and if such a player got into the game, the Greek stepped out quietly, bought a ten-cent cigar, lit it, and stood aside, talking to himself. He wanted speed, so he could win. Slow players always beat him because they worried so much about each marble, and ten marbles to worry about was too many.

The Greek himself never worried, he cussed. Even when he rolled up the highest score that was ever made on the machine, 13,000 double, he swore. God damn it, he said, thirteen, no good. And he picked up eight dollars, and collected twelve nickels from Joe, the cigar-stand man who got forty per cent of the machine's daily earnings. Some days the machine earned as much as forty dollars; forty per cent of that was more than the profit Joe made on cigars, cigarettes, candy bars, soda water, magazines, and newspapers. Joe never stepped out of the stand to verify a score, he just handed out the nickels because the machine was making good money for him. He didn't mind handing out the nickels at all. All he wanted was to see the machine going all day, and when the cold weather came and the vines of all the vineyards in the valley were touched by frost, the machine began to be busy from eight in the morning till three, four, five, and sometimes even six the next morning. That meant plenty of nickels in the slot for Joe.

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The machine was called The Crusader, but nobody ever bothered to notice its name except Jeff Logan, the young man nobody knew. Jeff came to the hotel around midnight one night and got a room, and in the morning he came down and saw the Greek and Peterson the barber shooting a game.

'What's this, boys?' he said, and the Greek said, 'Two dollars a game; want to shoot?'

'Sure,' said Jeff, and he got into the next game. He made the double hole, and then he got seven of the marbles into the sewer. 'Ha ha,' he said, 'zero double, that's a mighty big score.' The ninth marble was just about to fall into the sewer too, but instead plopped into the 2500 hole, which was right in front of the sewer. 'Ha ha,' said Jeff, 'there's still another marble; maybe I'll win yet.' The next marble rushed around at top speed and smashed right into the 2000 section, surrounded by wire.

If you were very lucky, you could get three marbles into the 2000 section, three into the 1500 section, and three in the 1000 section.

Nobody was ever that lucky though.

The Greek and Peterson the barber tried to beat Jeff's score, and normally each of them could have done it very easily, but Jeff stood over the board and watched every marble carefully. He didn't say a word, but something went wrong. The Greek got five marbles into the sewer, and the other five fell into small-number holes, and he didn't make the double. Then Peterson made the double on the first ball and seven small-number holes, two in the sewer, and his whole school added up to 3500 double, a whole thousand under Jeff's score.

Jeff picked up the money and went into Omar Khayyam's for breakfast.

The Greek looked at Peterson. 'Who is that fellow?' he said.

'Never saw him before,' said Pete. 'I've been in this town twenty-seven years. I've been the first barber in this hotel shop twelve years and I never shaved that fellow yet.'

Joe, standing behind the cigar-stand counter, yawned, dreaming of the summer just ended, the clear hot days and the fine warm evenings, the air full of the smell of ripening fruit. Now it was winter again, November, and the grapes were all shipped east, Chicago, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, New York, Boston.

Pretty soon there would be frost, and the few acres of Emperors would be spoiled. The farmers would have to hurry up and sell their Emperors if they wanted to get a little money out of their hard work.

Farmers are crazy, Joe thought.

He was a short Italian with a bullet wound in his shoulder: a poker game in Pennsylvania, 1909, and it was a good thing the Polak didn't kill him. Joe always wondered how it came about that the Polak didn't kill him. Joe cheated, and the Polak was sitting right across the table, four other players around the table, and the Polak shot him in the shoulder, and Joe's brother Louis, 1874-1918, hit the Polak in the face with a chair, swinging sideways, and killed the poor guy. The Polak's head was very smashed. 'Ah, God,' Joe sighed, 'poor brother Louis dead in the war, poor Polak dead in a poker game.' It was a long way from the coal mines of Pennsylvania in 1909 to this quiet little town in California, in 1935, a long long way by highway, and year, by grief, and by dream. 'Blessed Jesus,' Joe said in language that was not made of words, 'please forgive Joseph Torina for cheating in 1909, please forgive the Polak for getting excited and shooting, please forgive poor Louis, my brother, for killing the Polak. I do not want to make trouble, Jesus. I do not want to hate. Forgive me, Jesus, and let them come to me for cigars and cigarettes, newspapers and magazines. Let them light the cigar in peace and do no evil. Let them live quietly, smoking the brand they can afford.'

Praying, Joe could hear the steel marbles rolling around the board and he could see the Greek and the barber watching the marbles.

It was a nice game, and you couldn't cheat. That was the best part of it. You could lift the machine to make a marble fall into a big number, but nobody ever did it. That was not a way that anybody would care to cheat. That was not a swift secret way.

Jeff sat at the counter and ordered buckwheat cakes and coffee. The waitress was Mary Russek, a little German girl he remembered from the second or third grade at the Thomas Edison public school, across the tracks. He remembered her the minute she came up to take his order. He remembered how shy and pretty she was as a little girl, but he couldn't remember her name. Then it came to him because of the way she smiled: Mary Russek.

'How's it going?' he said.

Mary Russek wondered who he was because he wasn't like anybody in town. Everybody in town had a way of talking and acting that made you know he was of the town. She didn't know just what it was about them, but she knew even from the expressions of their faces that they were of the town. It wasn't dumbness, it was a sort of foolish joy in being home. Everybody of the town looked at home, and at the same time you could see how miserably lonely each of them was. This fellow, she could see, wasn't much at home anywhere, and she knew he was lonelier than anybody in town, but gayer too. She could tell he knew the only cure was death, and he didn't care to die right away. She had that feeling about him from the decent way he looked at her, smiling and being innocent.

'Oh,' she said, making a sigh out of it, 'so so.'

Jeff put a forkful of the buckwheat cake into his mouth and washed it down with coffee, smiling at the waitress.

'I'll tell you what,' he said. 'If I guess your first and last name, you go to a movie with me tonight; if I don't, I'll send you some flowers, a box of candy or anything else you'd like.'

'What?' said the waitress. Did he know her? Had she seen him somewhere? Talked to him?

'How can you guess my name?' she said.

'Oh, I don't know,' he said. 'I figure your first name ought to be Mary. Is that right? Remember, a movie.'

'Well,' said the waitress, 'that's my first name all right, but you couldn't guess my last name in a million years.'

He was feeling very happy about the waitress, going back to the beginning, to the early magic days of life in the world.

'No,' he said, 'I won't cheat you. I'll tell you. We were together at school, across the tracks. You're Mary Russek.'

The waitress felt like crying because someone had at last recognized her, someone had remembered her, someone knew she had been alive years ago. All the lost years were now regained for her, the emptiness filled with this boy's remembrance of her. She wished she could remember him; not his name, but him himself. She tried to think of all the boys at school, but only the essences of the meanest of them returned to her: the boy with the warty hands who was always teasing her, and the little Italian boy who tripped her while she was walking to the blackboard; that was all

'I don't remember you,' she said. She wanted to say she wished she could remember him, but all she could do was look at him and be sad.

'I don't think I've changed any,' he said. 'What time are you through working? Six?'

'I can't go to a movie,' she said. 'I'm married.'

He remembered the marble game with relief: that would be a nice way to get through every day.

He left a half dollar on his check and turned away from the waitress. She watched him push through the swinging doors into the lobby of the hotel. Behind the wall was the marble machine. They put the wall up so polite people wouldn't see the fruit shippers and brokers playing the game. Sometimes the players were noisy too, and swore out loud. So they put the wall up. You could hear them cussing if you were in the lobby of the hotel, but you couldn't see them, so that made it different. The polite people sometimes cussed too, even the very polite ladies. Even the local society ladies. They sometimes said little words that were practically dirty.

The waitress watched him walk beyond the wall. She had never felt so happy and sad at the same time. She didn't remember him, but she believed she knew him as well as anybody could ever know him, and while she had this feeling she felt also that she knew her husband, Tom, better than she knew anyone else alive, and that it was a meaningless knowing because there was nothing to know about Tom except that he was nothing. His nothingness was whole and endless. It was there when he was asleep and it was there when he was awake. And she loved him: she could never stop loving him, and yet she felt dimly that unless she could love this young man who had just had buckwheat cakes and coffee she would die of grief. The mere fact that he was alive in the world made her feel that if she could not love him, she would want to die, she would not want to do another single thing: lift a plate, take an order, speak a word, walk, go to bed, sleep, waken, live. She would want to be dead in the winter, cold in the cold, unalive with the deep livingness of the only one in the world who brought back to her her own life and all the hours of it.

That was before the frost came and the lobby began to fill with grape shippers who had closed their packing houses for the year and farmers who still had grapes to sell and insisted the frost hadn't

touched their grapes because of the heavy foliage. The farmers looked worried and unhappy and after a while the marble game got to be the biggest thing in the hotel. The farmers themselves stopped talking about their grapes and stood around the machine watching the Greek and Pete the barber and Jeff Logan and Sam (Pittsburgh) Berman and Walter (Boston) Grappa, and Benny (real estate) King shooting the marbles. The loudest one in the bunch was Benny King. It was natural with him, and he never talked under a shout. In fact, the marble game, with Benny shouting all the time, got to be the biggest thing in the whole town, the biggest thing in the whole country, and maybe the biggest thing of the year 1935.

Jeff went back to Omar Khayyam's that first day for supper, but Mary Russek had gone home. He was glad of that because he had been playing the marble game all day and although he had come out exactly even, except for the nickels he had pushed into the slot, he felt sullen and very much in love with the waitress, and knew he would not have been able to look at her the right way, or talk the right way.

The next morning he had breakfast at Hart's on Fulton Street because he wanted so badly to see the waitress again and didn't want such an absurd thing to go too far within himself. He was as sure as anyone could ever be about such a thing that he loved her, but he was sure also that he didn't want to love her. He was sure that she meant more to him than his own wife meant to him, more, even, than he imagined it would be possible for anyone to mean to him again, and, very deliberately, he wanted to stop such a beginning. He told Helen he wanted to visit the home town for a couple of weeks because he kept remembering the place. 'It's ridiculous,' he said, 'but I would rather you didn't come. I want to be there alone.'

She was glad, of course, that he didn't want her to go with him because she had visited the city years ago and thought of it as the dullest and most stupid place in the world. 'That's true,' he said, 'but I like the way you can hear the trains at night, the bells and the whistles, and the freight cars bumping together.'

They were tearing down the old telephone building on Tulare Street. Less than a dozen men were doing it. You could see them in the hollow building, bringing down walls of brick, standing in the

ruins they were making. The year of the building was still visible the day he stood and watched the men working: 1898. That wasn't very long ago, but it was long enough. Then, two days later, the building was almost all carted away in trucks. If he ever returned to the city, he would be anxious to notice what sort of a building they had put up in its place.

The old two-story Republican (morning paper) Building was being remodelled, or modernized, as the sign on the board fence said. That was too bad. It was the only building in the whole town he liked. No elevator. You walked upstairs and liked it.

The marble game got very lively the second day he was in town. Benny King showed up with twenty dollars of borrowed money and you could hear him all over the hotel. Benny never won. He was a man of about fifty who had always been known as a ladies' man. There was always a wilted flower in his lapel and the right expression on his face. All the same, he was a melancholy fellow and probably shouted because all his life things had gone haywire. He was supposed to be a real estate agent, but he hadn't sold a piece of property in years. He had no office, and clients were asked to meet him in the lobby of the hotel.

About three in the afternoon Jeff saw the waitress. She went over to Joe, behind the counter at the cigar stand, and bought a half dozen Santa Fé cigars for George, her boss. She turned to see if he was among the players, and he was, which was better than nothing. She thought he had left town.

Three days went by, and then it was Saturday, and the grape shippers and the farmers listened to the football games. It was warm in the lobby and the men smoked cigars and listened to the radio.

The valley was quiet, and the season was over. The grapes were harvested, packed in crates and sent to the eastern market, or squeezed into juice for wine. The farmers were quiet and unhappy. There was a farmer from Sanger who had forty acres of fine Emperors, but nobody would buy. He kept telling everybody that the frost hadn't touched his grapes, but nobody paid any attention to him. Jeff heard him talking about his grapes to the colored newsboy who walked in and out of the hotel all day. That was said because the colored newsboy only wanted to know if the farmer would like to buy a paper.

It was very still and sullen everywhere because the time of sun was ended, and it was winter. The air was clear and cold, making the reality of the town and the world a sharp and melancholy reality.

There was much of delight in his being again in the valley, and yet he knew that never before in his life had he been so sad, and of course there was nothing to be sad about. That was the worst of it. He knew there could never be more in life for anyone than what he already had, and yet he wanted more. And there wasn't more.

One night he woke up and heard the freight trains bumping together softly, and for some reason he decided he would go down in the morning and find out the name of the marble machine. He knew the machine had a name, because he had seen the letters making the name, but had never read them.

In the morning he read the name, *The Crusader*. The crazy holy warriors, killing for the Holy Sepulcher. Travelling far from home to find it.

And when the Greek with the false teeth showed up he said, 'Howdy, Crusader; any luck?'

'I shoot you a game for two dollars,' said the Greek.

And the game started again. Pete the barber joined him and the Greek, and an hour later Benny King showed up.

He walked into Omar Khayyam's every ten minutes or so for a drink of Scotch, smiling at the waitress behind the counter. It was all right. He loved her. He loved Mary Russek of the second grade more than anybody ever loved anybody, but it was all right. Nobody had ever found the Holy Sepulcher, and nobody was ever supposed to find it. You were only supposed to keep looking for it, killing for it. You found the rock-hewn tomb of Jesus when they put you away, dead, and never before. You found the instantaneous and endless glory of mortality when you died. It was all right. The marble game was always in the world.

He lost a lot of money because he was drunk, and knew all about everything, and didn't want money anyway. The Greek talked to himself and rolled up big scores, and Benny King shouted all over the place and lost.

And the next day it was the same, drinking and knowing and losing, and the day after it was the same, and never before in his life was he so happy and so miserable.

One day he hired an automobile and drove into the country, to Fowler, Selma, Kingsburg, Dinuba, Hanford, and when he got back to the hotel he didn't even go up to his room for a shower; he got right into the marble game and began drinking.

When he was very drunk, and very sober too, he sat at the counter in the restaurant and ordered a steak. The waitress stood before him, wishing to be endlessly dead.

'One thing,' he said to her in a loud voice that only she could hear, 'I want you to know. I remember you, and I remember the beginning of the world. That's all. And I want nothing more than I want the beginning again, and you are the beginning, and it's all right too. I can get by on food and water and air and fire, and I can get along without the beginning, but that is the only thing I want.'

He swallowed two mouthfuls of the steak and went back to the marble game. He played from two in the afternoon until six the next morning. He stayed in town five days longer, and then he went away.

The waitress, standing behind the counter at Omar Khayyam's, watched for him a week, and then she knew he was gone, and in the evening when she went home she was almost dead with grief, and except for the fact that she too could get by with food and water and air and fire, she would have been dead.

HAIR ¹

By JESSE STUART

(From the *American Mercury*)

IF YOU'VE never been to Plum Grove then you wouldn't know about that road. It's an awful road, with big ruts and mudholes where the coal wagons with them nar-rimmed wheels cut down. There is a lot of haw bushes along this road. It goes up and down two yaller banks. From Lima Whitehall's house in the gap it's every bit of a mile and a half to Plum Grove. We live just across the hill from Lima's house. I used to go up to her house and get with her folks and we would walk over to Plum Grove to church.

Lima Whitehall just went with one boy. I tried to court her a little, but she wouldn't look at me. One night I goes up to her and I takes off my hat and says: 'Lima, how about seeing you home?' And Lima says: 'Not long as Rister is livin'.' Lord, but she loved Rister James. You ought to see Rister James — tall with a warty face and ferret eyes, but he had the prettiest head of black curly hair you ever saw on a boy's head. I've heard the girls say: 'Wish I had Rister's hair. Shame such an ugly boy has to have that pretty head of hair and a girl ain't got it. Have to curl my hair with a hot poker. Burnt it up about, already. Shame a girl don't have that head of hair.'

Well, they don't say that about my hair. My hair is just so curly I don't know which end of it grows in my head until I comb it. I've prayed for straight hair — or hair of a different color. But it don't do no good to pray. My hair ain't that pretty gold hair, or light gold hair. It's just about the color of a weaned jersey calf's hair. I'll swear it is. People even call me Jersey.

There was a widder down in the Hollow and she loved Rister. Was a time, though, when she wouldn't look at him. She was from one of those proud families. You've seen them. Think they're better'n everybody else in the whole wide world — have to watch about getting rain in their noses. That's the kind of people they were in that family. And when a poor boy marries one of them girls

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he's got to step. They are somebody around here and they boss their men. So Rister James went with the woman I loved, Lima Whitehall, when he could have gone with Widder Ollie Spriggs. Widder Ollie wasn't but seventeen years old and just had one baby. Rister was nineteen and I was eighteen. Lima was seventeen. If Rister would have gone with Widder Ollie it would have made things come out right for me. God knows I didn't want Widder Ollie and she didn't want me. I wanted Lima. I told her I did. She wanted Rister. She told me she did.

Widder Ollie was a pretty girl — one of them women that just makes a good armful — small, slim as a rail, with hair pretty as the sunlight and teeth like peeled cabbage stalks. She'd have made a man a pretty wife. She might not have made a good wife — that's what Effie Spriggs told me. Effie is John Spriggs' mother and Ollie married John when she was fifteen. Effie said Ollie broke a whole set of plates, twelve of 'em, on John's head over nothing in God Almighty's world. And he just had too much honor in his bones to hit a woman with his fist. He just stood there and let her break them. And when she got through, John was kind of addled but he got out of the house and came home to his mother Effie, who is Widder Effie here in the Hollow. (She tried to pizen her man, but he found the pizen in his coffee and left her.) Widder Ollie went to live with Widder Effie later. They had a plenty — a big pretty farm down in the Hollow, fat barns, and plenty of milk cows. They were kindly rich people with heads so high you couldn't reach them with a ten-foot pole.

Widder Ollie, as I said, wouldn't look at Rister at first. She laughed at him when he used to hoe corn for her pappie for twenty-five cents a day. She made fun of poor old Rister's snaggle-toothed mother and said she looked like a witch. She laughed at Rister's pappie and said he looked like old Lonesy Fannin. That was an old bald-headed horse-doctor who used to go from place to place pulling the eyeteeth out of blind horses, saying they would get their sight back. And she said all the children in the James family looked like varmints. She'd laugh and laugh at 'em and just hold her head high. Then suddenly she was after Rister to marry him. But that's the way — pride leads a woman to a fall. And after she gets up, with a little of the pride knocked out of her, she's a different woman.

But I didn't blame Rister for not wanting her when he could get Lima. Lima was the sweetest little black-headed armload you ever put your two eyes on. I was in the market for Lima the first time I ever saw her. And I guess that was when we were babies. But I didn't know how to get her. I think I was a durn sight better-looking boy than Rister. It's funny how a woman will take to an uglier feller that way and just hold on to his coat-tails whether or not. Hang on just as long as she can. I always thought the reason Lima did that was because she knew Widder Ollie wanted Rister. And if there'd a been another girl around in the district in the market for a man *she* would have wanted Rister because Lima wanted him and Widder Ollie wanted him.

But nobody was after me. I was left out in the cold — just because of my hair, Mom always told me. Mom said I was a good-looking boy all but the color of my hair, and women wouldn't take to that kind of hair. Of course, it don't matter how ugly a man is, his Mom always thinks he's the best-looking boy in the district.

II

I used to go down past Lima's house last June when the roses were in bloom, and the flags. Them blue and yaller flags just sets a yard off and makes it a pretty thing. Now Rister never saw anything pretty in flowers. He never saw anything pretty in a woman's voice or the things she said, or the shape of her hands. He would watch a woman's legs — and go with them far as he could. He was that kind of a feller. I knew it all the time. I'd pass Whitehall's house. It would be on a Wednesday when Mom would run out of sugar or salt and I'd have to get on the mule and go to the store and get it. Rister would be down to see Lima on a weekday. Now God knows, when a man is farming he don't have no time to play around with a woman like a lovesick kitten. He's got to strike while the iron is hot. If he don't he won't get much farming done. When I saw Rister and Lima I reined my mule up to the palings. And I started talking to them as if I didn't care what they were doing. But I did care. I says: 'How you getting along with your crop, Rister?'

'Oh, pretty well,' he says. 'Nothing extra. Terbacker's getting a little weedy on me. Too wet to hoe in it today. Ground will ball up in your hand. Too wet to stir the ground when it is like that.'

Well, I knew he was a lying. But I never said anything. I know when ground is wet and when ground ain't wet. I'd been out working in it all morning. It was in good shape to work. Rister used to be a good worker. But you know how a man is when he gets love-sick after a woman. Take the best man in the world to work and let him get his mind on a woman and he goes hog-wild. That was the way with Rister.

While I was there looking over the palings, Lima went right up into his arms. He kissed her right there before me. Mom always says a woman that would kiss around in front of people was a little loose with herself. Well, I would have told Mom she lied about Lima if she'd said that about her to my face. I just didn't want to believe anything bad about Lima. I wanted her for my wife. But, men, how would you like to look over the palings from a mule's back and see your dream-wife in the arms of a man bad after women — right out among the pretty roses and flags — and her right up in his arms, her arms around his neck, and his arms around her waist pulling her up to him tight enough to break her in two. And he would say to her: 'Oo love me, oo bitsy baby boopy-poopy oo?' And she would say: 'I love U, U bitsy 'itsy boopy-poopy oo. I love my 'ittle 'itsy 'itsy bitsy turley-headed boopy-poopy oo.' God, it made me sick as a horse. It's all right when *you're* loving a woman. It don't look bad to *you*. But when you see somebody else gumsuck around, then you want to get the hell out of the way and in a hurry. It's a sickening thing.

I reined my mule away and I never let him stop till I was a mile beyond the house. I went on to the store and got the sugar. That was Wednesday night and Prayer-Meeting night at Plum Grove, so I had to hurry back and do up the work and go to Prayer Meeting.

I'm a Methodist — I go to church — but God knows they won't have my name on the Lamb's Book of Life because I saw the fiddle, play set-back, and dance at the square dances. Some of them even say terbacker is a filthy weed and none of it will be seen in heaven. Some won't even raise it on their farms. But I go to church even if they won't have me until I quit these things. I just up and go to see and to be seen — that's what we all go for. It is a place to go and about the only place we got to go.

I hurried and got my work done. I put the mule up and fed him. I helped milk the cows. I slopped the hogs, got in stovewood and

kindling. I drew up water from the well — got everything done around the house and I set out to church. Well, when I got down to Whitehall's place, there was Lima and Rister. They were getting ready to go. I gave them a head start and followed after. But I hadn't more than walked out in the big road until here come Widder Ollie and that baby of hers. He was just big enough to walk a little and talk a lot. We started down the road. I said to Ollie: 'Rister and Lima's just on ahead of us.'

And Ollie says: 'They're on ahead? C'mon, let's catch up with them. Take my baby boy, you carry him awhile.'

So I took her baby and started in a run with her to catch up with Lima and Rister. You know, a woman will do anything when she loves a man. I could tell Widder Ollie loved Rister. She was all nervous and excited. She had her mind set on getting Rister. And when a woman has her mind set on getting a man she can about get him. That made me think if she could get Rister I'd have a chance to get Lima. That was the only reason I'd be carrying a widder's baby around. I had heard that baby was the meanest young'n in the world. Now I believed it. It had been spiled by them two women — its mother and its grandmother. He would kick me in the ribs and say: 'Get up hossy! Get up there! Whoa back, Barnie.' And when he would say 'Whoa back' he would glom b me in the eyes with his fingers like he was trying to stop a horse. Then he would say: 'Get up, hossy, or I'll bust you one in the snoot.' And then he started kicking me in the ribs again. I was sweating, carrying that load of a young'n and keeping up with Widder Ollie. I felt like pulling him off my back and burning up the seat of his pants with my hand.

We saw them — Rister had his left arm around Lima's back and she had her right arm around his back. They were climbing up the first hill, that little yaller hill on this side of the haw bushes. It was light as day. The moon had come up and it lit the fields like a big lamp. Pon my word and honor I couldn't remember in all my life a prettier night than that one. You ought to have seen my corn in the moonlight. We had to pass it. I was glad for the girls to go by it and see what a clean farmer I was and what a weedy farmer Rister was. Not a weed in any of my corn. Pretty and clean in the moonlight and waving free as the wind. Lord, I felt like a man with religion to see my corn all out of the weeds and my terbacker clean as a hound dog's tooth — my land all paid for — not a debt in the world —

didn't owe a man a penny. Raised what I et and et what I raised. All I needed was a wife like Lima. She'd never want for anything. And I thought: 'What if this baby on my back was mine and Lima's? I'd carry him the rest of my days. I'd let him grow to be a man a-straddle of my back. But if I had my way now, I'd bust his little tail with my hand.'

We got right up behind Rister and Lima. And they looked around. Widder Ollie had me by the arm. I had her baby on my back yet. God, it hurt me. But I held the baby while Lima won the battle. You know women are dangerous soldiers. They fight with funny weapons. The tongue is a dangerous cannon when a woman aims it right. We just laughed and talked. We just giggled before Rister and Lima got to giggling at us. I was afraid they'd laugh at me for carrying the baby. They went on up the next hill — us right behind them. We went past the haw bushes and on to church. We just laughed and laughed and went on crazy. That baby on my back, a-making a lot of noise. We went up the hill at the church and the boys said: 'Look at that pack mule, won't you?'

Well, to tell the truth I'd rather be called a pack mule as to be called Jersey. So I just let them whoop and holler to see me with Widder Ollie and carrying her baby. Everybody out on the ground laughed and hollered enough to disturb the Methodist Church. Church was going on inside. But there was more people out in the yard than there was inside. They could see more on the outside than they could hear going on inside. I just wagged the baby right in the church house. Everybody looked around and craned their necks.

Rister and Lima acted like they were ashamed of us. Tried to sidle out of the way and get us in front so they could dodge us. But we stayed right with them. They set down on a seat. We set right beside them as if we were all together. People looked around. I had Widder Ollie's boy in my lap. He tried to hit the end of my nose. I had a time with him. I could see the girls whisper to one another. They watched us more than they did the preacher. He was telling them about widders and orphans. He was preaching a sermon on that. Rister would flinch every now and then. He wanted to be on another seat. But he couldn't very well move. So he just set there and took it. And I took it from that young'n. But I thought: 'There'll be the time when I come back to this church house with a

different woman. I'll come right here and marry her. It will be different from what they see tonight.'

III

We set right there and listened through that sermon. Boys would come to the winder and point to me from the outside — being with a widder woman who hadn't been divorced from her man very long. Boys around home thinks it's kindly strange to go with a widder woman — but I don't think so. They say a body is in adultery. But when two can't go on loving each other and start breaking plates — twelve at a crack — it's time they were getting apart. Especially when two has to go through life tied together when the mother-in-law tied the knot. I just felt sorry for Widder Ollie. She had always loved Rister and would have married him to begin with if it hadn't been for that mother of hers telling her so many times that she got to believing it that she was better than any man in the Hollow.

Well, they got us in front coming out of the church house. I thought we'd better take advantage of getting out first. So we took the lead going back. Boys just giggled and hollered at me when I come out of the house with the baby on my back. I didn't care. I was seeing ahead. So we just went out the road. The moon was pretty on the fields. A thousand thoughts came into my mind. I didn't want Rister to have Lima. I loved Lima. God, I loved her. Widder Ollie said to me going home: 'Don't think it has done much good for both of us tonight. We'll have to think of something different. I love that boy till it hurts. I could love him forever. I can't get him: Lima don't love him. She holds him because I want him. That is the way of women. You want what you can't get. When you get what you want you don't want it. I have always loved Rister. But my people wanted me to marry John. I married him. My mother married him. Life is not worth while without Rister. And here you've been out carrying my baby around and letting people talk about you so you could help me get Rister and you could get Lima.'

That was right. Life was not fair. The night so pretty. The moon above my clean corn. My house on the hill where I would take Lima. I needed a wife. I wanted the woman I loved. I loved

Lima Whitehall. And when we passed her home I wouldn't look across the palings at the roses. I remembered the week-day I passed and saw Rister out there with her. I just took Widder Ollie on home. And when we got to the gate I said: 'Widder Ollie, I am Rister kissing you. You are Lima kissing me. You are Lima for one time in your life. I am Rister one time in my life. Shut your eyes and let's kiss. Let's just pretend.' So we did.

Then I started on the long walk home up the branch. I had to pass Lima's house. Moonlight fell on the corn. Wind blew through the ragweeds along the path. Whip-poor-wills hollered so lonely that they must have been in love with somebody they couldn't get. I went in Lima's yard to draw me a drink of water. And right by the well-gum stood Rister and Lima. They weren't a-saying a word. They didn't see me; I didn't let myself be known; I just stepped back into the moonshade of one of the yard trees. I just stood there and watched. Lima went into the house after kissing and kissing Rister. When Lima left, Rister stood at the well-gum. He looked down at the ground. He kicked the toe of his shoe against the ground. There was something funny about the way he was acting. He kept his eye on the upstairs winder in that house. It had one of them pole ladders — we call them chicken ladders — just one straight pole with little tiny steps nailed across it. It was setting up back of the house — from the ground to the winder.

Then, suddenly, Rister let out one of the funniest catcalls you ever heard. It would make the hair stand up on your head. It wasn't a blue yodel, but it was something like a part of that yodel Jimmie Ridgers used to give. He done it someway down in his throat. It started out like the nip-nip-nipping of scissor-blades, then it clanked like tin cans, then like a foxhorn, way up there high, then it went like a bumblebee, then it rattled like a rattlesnake, and ended up like that little hissing noise a black snake makes when it warns you. I never heard anything like it. If it hadn't been for me knowing where it had come from I'd set sail off of that hill and swore it was a speret that made the noise. Rister gave the catcall once — held his head high in the air — no answer. So he gave it again. And from upstairs came the answer — a soft catcall like from a she-cat. So he takes right out in front of me and runs up that ladder like a tom and pops in at the winder.

I thought I'd go home and get the gun and come back and when

he came down that ladder I'd fill his behind so full of shot it would look like a strainer. Then again I thought I'd go over and pull the ladder down and make him go down the front way. God, I was mad! But I didn't do neither one. The whole thing made me so sick I just crawled out of the moonshade and sneaked over the hill home. I didn't know what to do. It just made me sick — sick at life. I just couldn't stand it. I couldn't bear to think of Lima in the dark upstairs with Rister.

I thought about taking the gun and going back and blowing Rister's brains out when he came back through that upstairs winder. I could have done it — God knows I could have done it. But they'd have got out the bloodhounds and trailed me home. Lima would have known who did it. I thought there must be a way for me to get Lima yet, and for her to come to her senses. But then I thought they are up in that dark room together. Lord, it hurt me. Pains shot through and through me. Life wasn't worth the pain one got out of it. I had something for her — a farm, a little money, clean crops, and plenty of food for cold days when the crows fly over the empty fields hunting last year's corn-grains. Rister didn't have nothing to take a woman to but his father's house, and den her with his own father's young'ns.

I went upstairs and got the gun from the rack. I put a shell into its bright blue barrel. Just one shell for Rister. I would kill him. Then I put the gun down. I would not kill Rister. I could see his blood and brains all over the wall. Old Sol Whitehall would run out in his nightshirt. He would kill Lima if he knew. And I wouldn't get Lima. It is better not to let a man know everything — it is better to live in silence and hold a few things than to lose your head and get a lot of people killed. I put the gun back, took the shell out of it, and set it back on the rack. I went to bed. But I couldn't sleep. I could see Lima and Rister in a settee in the front yard, kissing. I could hear that catcall. I memorized it. I said it over and over in bed. It came to me — every funny noise in it. I called it out, several times. It made the hair stand up on my head. It waked Pa up and he said: 'I've been hearing something funny in this house or my ears are fooling me. Funniest thing I ever heard. Like a pheasant drumming on a brushpile. Goes something like a rattle-snake too. I can't go to sleep.' But Pa went back to sleep. I kept my mouth shet. I just laid there the rest of the night and thought about Rister and Lima.

I didn't eat much breakfast the next morning. I went out and got the Barnie mule and I started plowing my terbacker. I couldn't get Lima off my mind. I prayed to God. I did everything I knew to do. And it all came to me like a flash. It just worked out like that.

So I waited. I just waited about ten hours. I plowed all day, worked hard in the fields. After I'd fed the mule, et my supper, done up the rest of the work, I slipped back up the path that I had come over the night before.

All the lights in the Whitehall house were out. The ladder was up at the winder at the back of the house. Everything was quiet. The old house slept in the moonlight. The hollyhocks shone in the moonlight. Old Buck came around and growled once or twice. But he knew me when I patted his head. He walked away contented. Brown, he was, in the moonlight — like a wadded-up brown carpet thrown among the flowers.

I held my head in the air, threw my chin to the stars, and gave that catcall — just as good as Rister gave it. Lima answered me from upstairs. The dog started barking at the strange sounds. My cap pulled low over my funny-colored hair I climbed the ladder and went in through the winder. The dog barked below. I was afraid. If Sol Whitehall found me there he would kill me. But I had to do this thing. I just had to.

Lima said: 'Oo bitsy 'itsy boopy-poopy oo. My turley-headed baby boy.'

I kept away from the streak of moonlight in the room. . . . Well, no use to tell you all. A man's past belongs to himself. His future belongs to the woman he marries. That's the way I look at it. That's the way I feel about it. This is a world where you have to go after what you get or you don't get it. Lima would not stand and say: 'Here I am. Come and get me.' No. She couldn't say it long as she was free — free without a care in the world. If she was like Widder Ollie, she'd be glad to find a nice young man like me even if I did have hair the color of a jersey calf and so curly you couldn't tell which end grew in my head. I know that much about women.

When my hat come off in the moonlight upstairs Lima just screamed to the top of her voice. Screamed like she had been stabbed. I made for the winder. She hollered: 'That hair! That hair!' She knew who I was. I went out of that winder like a bird. I heard Sol getting out the bed. I landed on soft ground right in the

hollyhock bed, as God would have it. I took down over the bank — circled up in the orchard through the grass so they couldn't track me. I hadn't got two-hundred feet when I heard Sol's gun and felt the shot sprinkling all around me in the sassafras like a thin rain falls on the green summer leaves.

I went on to bed that night. I dreamed of Lima. I loved her. I didn't care about Rister and his past with Lima. The way I looked at it, that belonged to them. A girl has the same right to her past that a boy has to his. And when a man loves, nothing matters. You just love them and you can't help it. You'll go to them in spite of the world — no matter what a man has done or a woman has done. That's the way I look at it. Be good to one another in a world where there's a lot of talking about one another, a lot of tears, laughter, work, and love — where you are a part of the world and all that is in it and the world is a part of you. I dreamed about Lima that night. She was in my arms. I kissed her. She was in the trees I'd seen in the moonlight. She was in the wild flowers I saw — the flowers on the yaller bank. She was in my corn and my ter-backer. She was in the wind that blows. She was my wife. She wasn't Rister's. She was mine. I loved her.

IV

Well, August ended, and September came along with the changing leaves. Then October when all the world turned brown and dead leaves flew through the air. The wind whistled lonesome over the brown fields. The crows flew high through the crisp autumn air.

The months dragged by. We went to church, but I barely ever spoke to Lima or to Rister. I went with Widder Ollie sometimes. People were talking about Lima. People understood. A woman, with her crooked finger over the paling fence, said: 'That poor Lima Whitehall was raised under a decent roof, and in the House of the Lord, a church-going girl with as good a father and mother as ever God put breath in. And look how she's turned out. You just can't tell about girls nowadays. They'll fool you — especially when they run around with a low-down boy like Rister James. Curly-headed thing — everybody's crazy about his hair. Look at that bumpy face and them ferret eyes and you'll get a stomachful, won't you?'

And the woman driving home from town with an express and

buggy said: 'You are right, Miss Fairchild. It's them low-down James people. That boy. He ought to be tarred and feathered, bringing a poor girl to her ruint. She's a ruint girl. Never can stand in the church choir anymore with the other girls and play the organ and sing at church. Her good times are over. That James boy won't marry her now. They say he's got to dodging her. Poor thing.'

So I went to Widder Ollie and I said: 'Everybody's down on old Rister now. You ought to go talk to him. He's down and out. Now is when he needs help. You know what they are accusing him of. I guess it's the truth. Wait till after I see the baby and I might take Lima and the baby. Be glad to get them. If I do, you can grab Rister.'

'I'll do it,' said Widder Ollie. 'I'll spin my net for him like a spider. I'll get the fly. I love that boy. I love him. He's got the prettiest hair you nigh ever see on any boy's head.'

The land was blanketed in snow. The cold winds blew. Winter was here. We heard the people talk: 'W'y, old Sol Whitehall's going to march that young man Rister right down there at the pint of his gun and make him marry Lima. It's going to be a shotgun wedding. Something is going to happen.'

The talk was all over the neighborhood. Everybody in the district knew about Lima. It is too bad when a girl gets in trouble and everybody knows about it. Around home she can never get a man. She's never respected again. For the man it don't matter much. He can go right back to the church choir and sing when they play the organ. Nothing is ever said about the man.

'I won't marry her,' said Rister, 'and old Sol can't gun me into it. I'll die first. I'll go away to the coal mines and dig coal till it is all over. I'll go where Widder Ollie's pappie is — up in West Virginia.'

So Widder Ollie goes to West Virginia after Rister has been there awhile. She leaves her boy with her mother and she goes to stay awhile with her pappie. I thought that was the right move. It just looked like everything was coming nicely to my hands. I had worked hard. I had prayed hard. I had waited. It was time to get something. But what a mess. What a risk to run over a woman. How she had suffered. How I had suffered. The lonely nights I'd gone out to the woods — nights in winter when the snow dusted the earth — when the trees shook their bare tops in the wind and the song of the wind in the trees was long and lonesome and made a

body want to cry — lonely nights when a body wondered if life was worth living — white hills in the moonlight — the barns with shaggy cows standing around them and sparrows mating in the eaves. Life is strange. Lima there, and the Lord knew what she'd do the way people were talking in the district. I was just waiting to see. It would soon be time.

The winter left. Birds were coming back from the South — robins had come back. And Rister was gone. Rister was at the mines — had a job — making more money than he'd ever made in his life. He wasn't working for twenty-five cents a day no more. He was working on the mine's tipple for three dollars a day. He was wearing good clothes. He was courting Widder Ollie right up a tree. And he had her up the tree a-barking at her like a hound-dog trees a possum.

The days went swiftly. April was here — green in the hills and the plow again in the furrows. Mom was there that ninth of April. She was with Lima. Doctor so far away and hard for poor people to get. Lima came through all right. She had the baby. Mom came home the next morning — I was waiting to see. She said: 'It's got that funny-colored hair — that jersey hair with two crowns on its head. But it ain't no Harkreader. It's the first time I ever saw any other person but a Harkreader have hair like that.'

I never said a word. I was so happy I couldn't say a word. I had the almanac marked and it had come out just right. So I up and went down to Whitehalls to see the baby. I went in by the bed. I reached over and picked up that baby. It was my baby. I knew it. It was like lifting forty farms in my hands. I kissed it. It was a boy. I never lifted a little baby before or never saw a pretty one in my life. But this baby was pretty as a doll. I loved it. I said: 'I'll go to the store and get its dresses right now, Lima.'

And she said: 'W'y, what are you talking about?'

'Look at its hair,' I said. 'Only a Harkreader has that kind of hair. You know that.'

Fire popped in her eyes — then tears to quench the fire. They flowed like water. 'When you get out of bed,' I said, 'we'll go to church and get married. We'll go right out there where we went to school and where we played together. We'll forget about Rister.'

She started out of the bed. I put her back. When a girl is down and out — a girl you love — a girl who is good and who loves as life

lets a woman and a man love — I could shed tears. I could cuss. I could cry. But what I did was to run out and chop up that settee. I dug up the green sprouts of the flags and the roses. My daddy-in-law, old Sol Whitehall, ran around the house on me and yelled: 'What the devil are you doing? Am I crazy to see you in my yard digging up my flowers?'

And I said: 'You are crazy, for I am not here, and you are not Sol Whitehall. You are somebody else.'

I dumped the flower roots over the palings. I left Sol standing there, looking at the wind.

I ran toward the store. I said to myself: 'I got her! I'll plow more furrows. Clear more ground. Plant more corn. I'll do twice as much work. I got her! And I am going to get my boy some dresses. Hell's fire! He's greater to look at than my farm!'

I got him the dresses. I ran back and told the preacher to be ready soon. She must be mine. And when I got back with the dresses my pappie-in-law said: 'And that scoundrel — married. Rister married to Widder Ollie Spriggs. Damn him to hell! God damn his soul to hell and let it burn with the chaff!'

But let them talk. Let them talk. They'll never know.

We went to the church. We were married there. Made Lima feel better to be married there. I could have been married in a barn. Would have suited me.

You ought to see my boy now. Takes after me — long jersey-colored hair. He's my image. He don't look like his Ma — not the least. He's up and going about.

Rister's back home now. He works for Widder Ollie and her mother. They all live in the house together. Everything came out just fine. We went to church together the other night, all of us. Rister and Widder Ollie walked behind. We went into the church house carrying our babies. I know people thought I was carrying Rister's baby, and that he was carrying the one I ought to carry. The Widder Ollie's brat was digging Rister in the ribs and saying, 'Get up, hossy. Get up, hossy, or I'll hit you on the snoot.'

And he'd have done it too, if Rister hadn't stepped up a little faster. That kid is twice as big as he was the night I carried him. Ollie says he won't walk a step when she takes him any place. Makes Rister carry him everywhere. People look at us and grin. They crane their necks back over the seats to look at us all together

again. Ollie understands. Lima understands. Rister don't understand so well.

And we go back across the hills shining in moonlight. Summer is here again. Corn is tall on the hills. Then I hold my head in the air, throw my chin to the stars, and I give that strange catcall once more. Rister looks a little funny. He understands now better than he did.

LIEUTENANT PEARSON¹

By BENEDICT THIELEN

(From *The Atlantic Monthly*)

AS SOON as he woke up, even through his eyes half closed with sleep, he could see that it was going to be a fine day. The sun fell on the floor just beyond the bed and, although it did not touch him, he could feel its early warmth. He reached up and pushed the blankets toward the foot of the bed and then glanced at the watch on the table at his side. It was only quarter to seven, and since it was a holiday no one was up yet. In the bed next to him Helen was still sleeping soundly.

He yawned and put his hands behind his head and looked along the covers at the open window and the tree and the warm sun-filled sky beyond. He felt fully awake now and not like staying in bed any longer. He held his breath for a moment and listened to the silence of the house around him. He looked at the watch again and cleared his throat. Helen stirred in her sleep, but did not wake.

He partly sat up, leaning on one elbow, and scratched his head with his other hand. He yawned again, this time more loudly. Helen slowly opened her eyes.

'Oh,' he said, 'did I wake you?'

She shook her head and yawned.

'I've been awake some time,' he said. 'I don't seem to need as much sleep as I used to.'

The idea made him feel virtuous. Napoleon never slept more than three hours a night.

'No?' she said, and yawned again.

'We waste a lot of time sleeping. Just think of all the things you might be doing instead of sleeping eight-nine hours a night. You know: reading and . . . I never seem to get time to read.'

'No. That's true.'

'Well, anyway,' he said, 'it's a great day.'

She looked toward the window, blinking a little in the strong light.

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'For the parade, I mean,' he said.

She seemed surprised for a moment. Then she said: 'Oh, yes, that's so. Goodness...'

He looked at her and gave a short laugh.

'I guess maybe you'd forgotten all about it.'

'Why, yes, I really had,' she said. 'Oh, I'm so sleepy.'

She yawned again. He pushed the covers aside and slid his feet into his slippers and got up.

He frowned as he walked across the room. Then he saw his uniform hanging over the back of a chair and his expression changed. He paused and bent down to look at it. He touched the sleeve with his hand.

'You have it pressed?' he called over his shoulder.

'Yes.'

'No moths in it, were there?'

'No.'

He looked up.

'You keep it in one of those bags, do you?'

She nodded her head.

He stood looking down at the khaki cloth with a slight smile on his face, then turned and went on into the bathroom. As he stropped his razor blade he softly whistled to himself 'Over There.'

He shaved, and while he was taking his shower Helen came in and washed and brushed her teeth. He talked to her from behind the shower curtain, raising his voice to be heard above the down-swishing of the water.

'Remember when we left? The send-off we got?'

'Left? Left where?'

'For the other side. For France.'

'Oh... oh, yes. Goodness, doesn't it seem long ago?'

'Oh, I don't know. It doesn't seem so long ago.'

'How long is it, anyway?' she said, and he could tell from her voice that she was talking with hairpins between her teeth. 'Fifteen years?'

'Seventeen,' he said.

'Seventeen!'

'Seventeen years,' he said, slowly.

He turned on the cold water.

'It's awful,' she said. 'So long ago...'

He started to speak, but the cold water took his breath away.

'That's right, though,' she said. 'Shirley was only one then and she'll be eighteen next month.'

He shut off the water and swept the curtain aside and reached over for a towel. He rubbed himself vigorously, breathing deeply and feeling hard and strong at having taken a cold shower and having waked up early on this clear fine morning.

'They don't remember a thing about it,' he said.

'No.'

'That's why it's a good thing to have a parade like this. To remind them . . . uh . . . I mean to show them, you know, give them something to think about . . . the sacrifices we had to make . . . I mean so Democracy and . . .'

'Yes,' she said. 'Yes, that's true.'

He leaned forward to look in the mirror, carefully parting his wet hair.

'Otherwise people forget . . . I mean the sacrifices . . .'

'Excuse me just a second, dear . . .' She reached in front of him and opened the mirror door of the bathroom cabinet. 'I just wanted to get that Kleenex . . . there.'

She smiled up at him and went out.

When he went back into the bedroom she had already gone downstairs. He heard her talking to the cook in the dining room. He glanced at the watch and saw that it was half past seven. It was still early, but he felt the long beautiful morning slipping away from him and he hurried to get dressed.

He put on the shirt and trousers of the uniform. The khaki cloth felt rough and hard after the clothes that you were used to wearing every day. He opened the door of the closet and put on the coat, looking into the full-length mirror on the inside of the door. He buttoned the coat and stood looking at himself in the mirror. The coat seemed tight. It was all right across the chest, but it seemed tight farther down. Creases ran out from each of the lower buttons. He stood up straighter and held in his stomach. He went across the room and got his Sam Browne belt and came back and put it on in front of the mirror. He tried to buckle it at the place where the darker mark in the leather showed that he had always worn it, but it felt too tight and he let it out to the next hole. He stood very straight in front of the mirror, holding in his stomach and frowning,

his chin thrust out and his shoulders squared. The electric light above his head shone brightly on the gold of the second lieutenant's bars on his shoulders. Lieutenant Pearson, he thought — Lieutenant Frank Pearson — Lieutenant Frank Richmond Pearson of the Infantry.

II

When he got to the door of the dining room he paused. Somehow he had expected that Helen and Shirley would both be there, but the room was empty. He could hear Helen still talking to the cook out in the kitchen. He stood looking toward the kitchen door. After what seemed a long time it opened and Helen came in, looking flushed and annoyed. She drew out her chair and sat down and dropped two pieces of bread into the toaster.

'I'm terribly sorry, Frank,' she said, 'but of course the girl had to go and run out of coffee without saying a word about it to me till just now. We'll have to have tea.'

'Oh,' he said.

She looked up.

'Do you mind awfully? Of course I know how you hate tea for breakfast, but ...'

'No,' he said. 'No, that's all right.'

'Of all the stupid things!'

He stood by the door looking down at her as she straightened the things on the table in front of her.

'Where's Shirley?' he asked.

A piece of toast popped up out of the toaster and Helen took it and began to butter it.

'Shirley? Oh, she's sleeping. She went to a dance last night.'

'Oh, I see.'

She looked up at him.

'Goodness, don't you look nice!'

He smiled and said, 'It feels like old times.'

He came over to the table.

'Is it much too tight for you?' she asked, as she cut the piece of toast in two.

'Tight?' he said quickly. 'No, why should it be tight?'

He stood up straighter.

'Oh, I didn't know. I thought it might be a little, that's all.'

He sat down and looked down at his coat before he pulled the chair in to the table.

'I guess it's shrunk a little, at that,' he said. 'Wool shrinks, sort of, doesn't it?'

'Oh, yes, wool always shrinks a lot if you aren't careful.' She handed him a cup of tea. 'I'm awfully sorry about the coffee.'

'That's all right.' He took a sip of the tea. 'This isn't bad. By the way, where are you going to be for the parade? You know Doc McKim said you could watch it from his office if you wanted to.'

'Oh,' she said. 'Oh, yes, that might be a good idea.'

She looked around the table.

'What are you looking for?' he asked.

'I just . . . oh, here it is.'

She took the cover off the pot of jam and took out a spoonful.

'You better get down in plenty of time, though,' he said, 'or else you'll have a hard time finding a place to park. And you better get Shirley up soon, too, because you know how long she takes to get all fixed up.'

'I hate for her not to get enough sleep,' she said.

'Well, of course . . .'

'Oh, I'll get her up in plenty of time.'

He shook his head.

'She stays out too darn late, anyway. How do we know . . .'

'Shirley's eighteen, Frank. After all . . .'

'I know, but how do we know . . .'

She smiled at him and said: 'Goodness, that uniform's becoming. It makes you look ten years younger.'

He looked down at his chest and then up at her and smiled.

'Really,' she said.

He laughed and said: 'Say, you ought to see the surprise we're going to have for you today. Something really new.'

'What is it?'

He shook his head.

'I can't tell you. But wait till you see. This is really something.'

'I can't imagine . . .'

'Oh, you'd never guess.' He laughed again. 'And listen, after the parade you come right over to the Post Headquarters, will you?'

'The Post Headquarters?'

'Yes, there's going to be something going on there. I can't tell you what it is, but you and Shirley come right over.'

'Well, you've certainly roused my curiosity.'

'You'll see,' he said.

III

As he drove away from home with the windows of the sedan down, he felt the early morning air warm against his face and was conscious of the good aroma of his first cigar of the day. The streets seemed clean and freshly washed and the houses looked modern and comfortable. In front of many of them flags were flying, and when people that he passed looked at him in his uniform, with the forage cap set rakishly over one eye, he felt a proud connection between himself and the flags that flew above the green of the well-kept lawns.

These were the lawns and the houses that they had fought to protect; these were the houses that, but for them, might now be lying in ashes; these were the lawns whose soft green might, but for them, have been forever blighted by the iron heel of war. Sometimes you wondered what it was all about, and there were days when it all seemed pretty pointless, but that was only because in time of peace you got soft and forgot the stern necessities of war and the times that tried men's souls. A lot of people were clever talkers and knew how to shoot off their mouths when there was no danger, but it was the silent men who perhaps didn't make much of a hit at a pink tea or a poetry reading who had made the country what it was and who, when the time had come, had offered up their lives in its defense. Lieutenant Pearson, he thought — Lieutenant Frank Pearson — Lieutenant Frank Richmond Pearson, of the Infantry. And what if he had never seen any actual fighting? That wasn't his fault. He had been ready to fight whenever they said the word. And if it hadn't just happened that the Armistice was signed the week after they landed he would have been in some pretty ugly fighting. And in the infantry, too, by God, where you meet your man face to face.

He began to hum to himself: 'The infantry, the infantry, with dirt behind their ears...'

He drove past the station and up to the freight yard. Some of the

boys were already there and they waved to him as he got out of the car and hurried across to the freight shed.

As he came up to the platform several of them snapped to attention and saluted. Although he knew it was only done as a joke, it made him feel good to touch his cap negligently and say, 'At ease,' especially when he looked around at them and saw that he was the only commissioned officer there and that even Charlie Potter, who was one of the biggest real-estate men in the whole state, only had a corporal's chevrons.

Charlie came up to him and held out his hand and said: 'I want to congratulate you, Pearson, for having worked this. I understand it was your idea, too.'

'Well, yes,' said Frank. 'I guess it was.'

'Well, I think you've been mighty smart, and I'll tell you there aren't many towns in this country that have a souvenir of the war that's as valuable and . . . and unique as this is.'

'Well, I knew this fellow that works in a bank in Paris,' said Frank, 'and he fixed it up — although it was some time before he could get ahold of one.'

They went into the shed and there it was: the real Marne taxicab that had helped save France and that they had just been able to get over in time for the Memorial Day parade.

They all stood there for a few moments without saying anything, looking at the car. Frank felt proud and embarrassed at the same time.

'Gosh,' he said finally, 'they certainly are small.'

'That'll be something to show our children and our grandchildren,' said Charlie Potter. 'A real Marne taxi that saved France when the Germans were at the gates of Paris, threatening . . .'

'Gallieni was the boy,' said Marty Hughes.

They all nodded their heads.

'Yes,' said Charlie Potter, 'but if von Kluck hadn't gone and . . .'

They started arguing about the strategy of the Marne. Frank stood in front of the car, looking at it, and hearing the fine forgotten names, sonorous and glorious with past history, names that meant something, that were connected with world-shaking events in which he had played a part: Gallieni, Joffre, St. Denis, von Bülow, von Kluck, Vitry-le-François — and on from there to Mons, Soissons, St. Mihiel, the Argonne and Belleau Wood. Those were the days!

'Say,' said Art Stallknecht, 'who's going to drive this bus, anyhow?'

'Why, Frank Pearson, of course,' said Charlie Potter. 'It was his idea and he got it for us, so...'

Frank flushed and said: 'Oh, hell, why pick on me?'

'No, you're the boy,' said Charlie. 'You're elected.'

Marty Hughes looked at the car and then at Frank and said: 'I don't know if he can get behind the wheel, though. There's not much room.'

They all laughed and Art Stallknecht said: 'Pull in that bay window, shavetail.'

'That's all right,' said Frank. 'I'll show you.'

He got into the car and squeezed behind the high steering post.

'O you Barney Oldfield!' Marty called to him.

Somebody got in front of the car and cranked it. Frank turned on the ignition and the engine started, sputtering and choking. He raced it, then stalled several times until he found the correct gear-shift, and finally drove it slowly down the incline from the freight shed to the yard.

A lot more men had come up and now they all gathered around the car, looking at it and joking and talking to Frank. He felt proud and happy.

'Hey,' someone called, 'we're due to form in ten minutes.'

'Have a drink and forget about it,' said Marty Hughes.

He passed the bottle up to Frank.

'Say, gee, I don't know...' Frank began.

'Come on, shavetail,' said Art Stallknecht.

Frank took a drink out of the bottle and handed it back.

The whiskey fell with a thump, hot and golden in his empty stomach, making him expand his chest, gilding the clear warm morning.

A group of men with their arms around each other's shoulders began singing 'Mademoiselle from Armentières.'

Charlie Potter looked at his wrist watch and said: 'Come on, men — zero hour.'

Half a dozen men climbed into the car and a bottle was pushed across to Frank. He hesitated, then took another drink. It tasted even better than the last one.

The men in the back seat went on singing 'Mademoiselle from

Armentières,' and as he tugged at the stiff left-handed notch gear-shift and slowly let in the clutch, Frank came in on the chorus, 'Rinky-dinky-parley-voo.'

People in the street stared at them and then cheered as they moved slowly, jerkily along. When they got to the place where the parade was forming, a crowd quickly gathered around the machine, and all the faces, good-natured and smiling, looked up admiringly at Frank as he sat behind the wheel, the bright sun shining on the gold lieutenant's bars, the whiskey golden and warm in his stomach, gilding the warm clear day and the high white rainless clouds that floated slowly past overhead. The grinning good-natured faces yelled things up at him and people called him Lieutenant and his friends yelled 'Hey, shavetail,' out of the corners of their mouths — respectable decent friendly people making believe to act tough — and somebody passed him another drink, and golden rye whiskey gilded the warm morning. Bugles called and drums began to beat, making the blood run faster through your veins, and once again you were alive and not just existing, going on from day to day, to the office and back home, home and back to the office — the maid forgot to order coffee — Shirley stays out too late. The hell with it, and he came in strong on 'Rinky-dinky-parley-voo!'

IV

The parade began to move slowly down the street, the bugles calling and the drums beating, and it no longer looked like Main Street, but the outskirts of Paris, with Lieutenant Frank Pearson, trusted adviser to Gallieni — Captain Frank Pearson, savior of France — driving the first taxicab out of Paris, through St. Denis, across the war-menaced fields to the Marne — Major Frank Pearson, 'Rinky-dinky-parley-voo.'

There were two blocks more before the Chambers Building where Doc McKim had his office and where Helen and Shirley would be sitting in the window watching him, surprised and proud, waving at him as he passed, driving the Marne taxi, with Gallieni himself in the seat next to him, Colonel Frank Pearson.

There was one block more before the sensation of the parade would come into view, the Marne taxicab, driven by General Frank Pearson, with a blood-soaked bandage around his head, telling

Gallieni not to worry, everything would be all right, for 'the Yanks are coming, the Yanks are coming.'

There were a lot of faces at the window of Doc McKim's office and he could only glance up a few times as they approached and then passed the building. He didn't see Helen or Shirley up there, but he might easily have missed them, there were so many faces jammed in there together.

He turned to Art Stallknecht, sitting in the seat beside him, and said: —

'Did you see Helen or Shirley up there? I couldn't get a really good look when we went past.'

Art looked back over his shoulder.

'No, I didn't notice them.'

'I guess maybe they got there late and had to stand in the back,' Frank said.

'Boy,' said Art, 'I bet they got a kick out of Poppa driving a real Marne taxi.'

Frank laughed and shook his head.

'Maybe they didn't get up there, at that. Yes, I shouldn't wonder if maybe they had to watch it from the sidewalk, account of the crowds.'

'There's certainly a jam,' said Art, looking around.

'I told them they better be on time,' said Frank. 'But you know how women are, especially the kids. They take all night to get ready.'

'Isn't that a fact, though! Why, I remember...'

'I don't see what they can do that takes that long,' said Frank.

'I remember the last time we took a trip in the car it was always the same old story: everybody ready to start, the baggage all strapped on, and then half an hour cooling our heels waiting for Joanie to powder her face or God knows what.'

They came up to the red-white-and-blue-draped reviewing stand and a cheer went up and the bass drummer in the band beat his drum.

'Some turnout,' said Art.

Frank looked toward the stand.

'I guess maybe they had to get a seat there,' he said. 'I don't see them, though.'

The cheers kept up. He smiled at the people in the reviewing stand and bent down low over the wheel, like a racing driver.

'Old Barney Oldfield,' said Art.

The boys in the back seat came in strong on the chorus, 'Rinky-dinky-parley-woo.'

After the reviewing stand there were only a few more blocks before they got to their Post Headquarters, where they were to disband and where the car was to be officially presented to the city. Back to Paris, slowly, after the victory of the Marne, Colonel Frank Pearson drove his taxi, with his old friend Art Stallknecht Gallieni in the seat next to him, tired and battle-stained, but with a sense of duty well done — Major Frank Pearson.

'By the way,' said Frank, 'how is Joanie? Shirley said she had the flu last winter or something.'

'Yes, she had a pretty tough time for a while, but she's all right now.'

'Bad thing, flu,' said Frank. 'Helen had it winter before last, too.'

'It leaves you all washed out,' said Art.

Frank drove the car into the yard of their headquarters.

'O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,' Marty Hughes called from the back seat when the car had stopped and Frank had shut off the engine.

They all climbed out of the car and somebody started to wave a bottle and sing, 'You're in the army now.'

Charlie Potter came up, looking worried.

'Go easy, fellows. Remember there are going to be ladies present.'

'That was no lady — that was my wife,' somebody called from the back of the crowd, and everybody laughed.

V

As the people began to arrive, Frank watched them carefully, waiting for Helen and Shirley, but he didn't see them, and presently the official ceremony of presentation began.

Charlie Potter made the speech for the Post, and the mayor made a speech of acceptance in which he thanked all the members who had contributed to the purchase of this battle-scarred relic of glory which would live forever as a reminder of the glorious war record of

their town and serve as a reminder — nay, an inspiration — to future generations, to their children and their children's children, of the times that tried men's souls, and cause all who saw it to pause for a moment in their daily round of duties and activities to give a thought to the men who had given their All and made the Supreme Sacrifice that Justice, Civilization, and Democracy might live, and that, in the words of another Great Martyr, Freedom might not perish from the earth.

'Good speech,' said Art Stallknecht, and Frank nodded, looking around at the crowd to see who was there.

'Good night!' said Art. 'Charlie's going to start in all over again. Look!'

Charlie had jumped up and was waving his arms for attention.

'And now, before we leave,' he said, 'there is just one more thing that I would like to say. In all this we have neglected to mention one thing, and that is the name of the man to whose interest and — uh — initiative we owe the presence today in our midst of this priceless relic of the glorious days when Civilization stood with its back to the wall and gave its All that . . .' He suddenly stopped and looked around at his audience with a grin. 'Don't worry, folks, I'm not going to try and compete with Hizzoner, here. I just want to draw your attention to the fact that the man who is responsible for all this, whose idea it was in the first place to get ahold of this — this relic, is none other than our esteemed fellow citizen and shave-tail, Frank Pearson. Frank, step up here and say a few well-chosen words to the assembled company.'

There were loud cheers and whistles, and Frank was pushed toward the platform, blushing and trying to resist, and conscious all the time that Charlie Potter, who was one of the biggest real-estate men in the state, had just called him by his first name.

'Come on now, Frank,' said Charlie Potter as Frank stood on the platform and the crowd became quiet. 'Just a well-chosen word or two, that's all. Just a well-chosen word.'

Frank took off his forage cap and held it tightly in his hands, and looked around at the people below. There seemed to be a great many of them. Perhaps, he thought, Helen and Shirley were somewhere in the back. You couldn't really tell.

'Well,' he said, 'I suppose I ought to start out by telling a story about a couple of Irishmen, but I don't seem to be able to remember

any, so . . . well, all I can say is, I'm glad you're all so pleased with the idea of having this . . . this relic. I sort of thought it would be a good idea and act as an inspiration and . . . an inspiration to those who are too young to remember what it was all about during . . . in those days . . . and well, I guess that's all. I thank you.'

He turned and ran off the platform to the sound of laughter and cheers.

'Yea, Demosthenes,' Marty Hughes called as he went past, and slapped him on the back.

'Some speech, Frank,' said Art.

'Come on,' said Frank, wiping his forehead with the back of his hand and putting on his forage cap. 'Let's get out of here.'

They got into Art's car and began driving back down Main Street toward the station, so that Frank could get his car, which he had left down in the freight yard.

'Yes, sir,' said Art with a grin, 'quite a speech.'

'I never was much good at giving a spiel,' said Frank. 'I don't know.'

'Me either. It's too bad, though, that Helen and Shirley weren't there to hear you. They would of got a kick out of it.'

'It's a good thing they weren't,' said Frank.

'What do you suppose happened to them? Didn't they know we were going to have the presentation?'

'I just told them to come around,' said Frank. 'I didn't say what for. I thought it would be more fun if they got a surprise.'

'It's too bad they didn't make it.'

'Oh, Shirley probably stalled around until it was too late. Anyway, she was out late to a dance last night.'

'Isn't it the damndest thing the way kids stay up all night nowadays? Why, in our day . . .'

'That's what I think. But it doesn't do any good to kick about it. They just don't pay any attention.'

They were silent for a time, then Frank said: —

'You ever have any trouble with your oil burner, Art? Ours went out of commission twice last winter.'

Art shook his head. 'No, I never had any trouble with mine. What kind have you got?'

'I've got a Silent Sentinel.'

'Why, I've got a Sentinel, too,' said Art. 'I don't see why you

should have any trouble with yours. I never had any with mine.'

'That's funny, isn't it?' said Frank.

'I'll tell you what I'll do, Frank,' said Art. 'I'll come over one of these days and take a look at it. I've fooled around a good deal with those things in my spare time and maybe I can see what's wrong with it.'

'Thanks, Art, that would be fine if you'd do that. Anyway, we ought to try and see more of each other, Art. We ought to have some of those poker games we used to have.'

'That's a fact, Frank. We'll have to try and do that.'

'They used to be a lot of fun,' said Frank. 'We ought to try and do that, Art.'

Art drew up at the freight shed and Frank got out. They shook hands and Art said: 'Well, I certainly enjoyed that speech, Frank.'

They both laughed and Frank said: 'Well, I'll be seeing you. Thanks for the lift.'

He stood for a few moments watching Art as he backed his car around and drove away. Then he unlocked his own car and got in and drove off.

He went down Main Street in the direction in which the parade had gone. The street was almost empty now. After the crowds which had been in it only a little while ago it seemed quite deserted. He drove slowly. The day was still clear and warm, but the sun was higher and the air did not feel as fresh as it had earlier in the morning. His mouth felt dry from the whiskey and the four cigars that he had smoked. Usually he allowed himself only two cigars before lunch.

As he passed the reviewing stand men were already beginning to take it apart, piling up the timbers in trucks that were standing by the curb. Red-white-and-blue streamers and shreds of crêpe paper were scattered over the sidewalks and clinging to the rough surface of the wood of which the stand was constructed.

Then he left the centre of town behind him and drove along the smooth clean streets of the residential sections. Flags were flying in front of many of the houses, above the smooth, well-kept lawns.

Lieutenant Frank Pearson, he thought — Second Lieutenant Pearson — Frank Pearson.

THE IRON CITY¹

By LOVELL THOMPSON

(From *Story*)

THERE is a rawness in the city of Liverpool that permeates the flesh and grips the vitals of a man who, like Gideon Grimes, is not vigorous. The city, as it stood in his mind, appeared coated with cold, cohesive dust. When he thought of the city he felt sticky particles rasping upon his finger tips and saw heavy dust-hardened raindrops, and fog stiffened by the filth of Liverpool. The odor of Liverpool was to him that of stale grease; even after he had crossed the Mersey Bar a taste of Liverpool clung in the back of his throat. Was it the queer name of the city that stamped this impression on him, or was it that it was the place where he had met Shank?

Gideon Grimes hated the city — and yet it was this city, phlegmatic, and depraved, that beyond all others lay closest to the varied and beautiful ocean. The graceful ships of a hundred nations rested here close to the stinking raw-boned docks. In the harbor the water was smooth, sluggish, and crusted with a gelatinous scum. Yet here, in spite of ugliness and crudity, the thousand-fingered hand of the ocean gently soothed the land. The mighty rhythm of the ocean's breath is sensitively felt in Liverpool. The scum upon the surface of the water assiduously charts upon the piles of the docks the record of each breath. Twice a year the ocean heaves a few vast equinoctial sighs, the tide rises high and in Liverpool the highest tide is more permanently recorded than the rest, by the scum mark on the piles, by the bits of debris shoved far up to a damp and rotting security beneath the bellies of the docks. Here on the harbor's edge human scum is also deposited and left till the next high tide reaches up for it once more. Thus the hand of the ocean reached for the man Shank, on the same September night that Gideon Grimes also embarked for America.

Under the shelter of the dock a few electric light bulbs shone listlessly. They were on the ends of long rods which stretched down

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out of darkness. They lit up the sordid dirt and scraps of paper upon the dock floor. Gideon Grimes tightened his muscles to try to stop shivering. The anguished clatter of a winch banged at the back of his head. He was weak. He was depressed. He gazed down the dockway into the murk as if in search of a reason.

And out of the murk came the man Shank whose name he did not then know. He, too, bore a duffle bag upon his shoulder. He leaned forward with it and thus was able to support it partly on his back and partly also upon his elbow, cocked up for the purpose with a hand upon his hip. His other arm, the left, with the fingers of the hand hooked into the fastening of the sea bag upon his right shoulder, concealed his face. So Grimes observed the rest of him. He was shabby, neither dirty nor clean, neither tidy nor unkempt — he was utterly ordinary and he bent beneath his load like a tallow taper before a hot blaze.

When he had come quite close to the gangplank before which Grimes stood, he threw down his duffle bag. He was small, about the size of Gideon, and astonishingly thin, and his pinched face except for his eyes was no more unusual than the rest of him. His eyes looked as if their owner's line of vision traveled about twenty feet and then turned a right angle. The man looked as if he were trying to see around a corner; looked as if he did see around one; looked as if he saw nowhere else. He looked at Gideon Grimes, seeming to have to look away to get him in his line of vision, and he spoke.

'Say, Brother, ain't there extra quarters on these ships, fellars like you going back — extra bunks I mean? Think I could stow away with you fellars — no one would notice? Won't show up for boat drill. Slip ashore in Boston. What do you think, eh?'

'I guess so,' said Gideon.

'I'll stick close to you,' said Shank, and close he remained.

They labored into the black belly of the ship.

On a ship of this type what is often called the first deck is beneath the actual outside deck of the ship. By outside deck is meant what the ordinary man considers the deck of a ship — the outermost uppermost side which roofs in the hold and upon which the officers' quarters, funnels and what not appears to be a super-structure. Beneath this outside deck then is the first deck — a subterranean deck, as it were, and on it, forward in the bow, are quarters for the crew, rooms lined with bunks.

They walked this deck, Shank and Grimes, between rows of iron supports. The deck was dark and for the most part empty.

On this freighter, as on other ships of the same line, there were the extra quarters which Shank had asked about. These had been put in after the building of the ship, to accommodate extra hands required for the shipping of certain cargoes — a deckload of livestock, for instance. Thereafter these quarters were used as a sort of unofficial sub-steerage, where men, whom the line desired to transport across the ocean, were quartered.

The *Iron City* had a cabin for four next these quarters. It was designed for those who were in charge of the men who worked on the cargo. Grimes made for this cabin, in the hope that the other free passengers might be sufficiently few for him to occupy it alone. Shank, however, followed him into the room, so Grimes directed him to throw his bag into a lower bunk and to crawl into an upper himself. Gideon did the same and the cabin was occupied. Other men following looked in but were directed to the larger bunk-room further along.

Shank's scheme of stowing away was extraordinarily feasible. The captain of a freighter pays no attention to this idle element of his crew. There are say ten men in the extra quarters — most of them probably have been employed in bringing livestock from America to England; no one ever sees them all together. The face of the stowaway becomes familiar. No one realizes that he is an extra. The officers are searching for a name on their lists which has no corresponding face, not for a face which has no name.

With blankets given out later by the purser, and with a dry straw mattress beneath him, Gideon felt warm and slept. As he dropped off, he noticed that a rod of light from one of the bulbs on the dock came through a doorway and through a port and at last rested upon the recumbent figure of Shank — this leech who clung to him — it lit Shank's face, his strange eyes now closed and his mouth now gently ajar.

During the next day, the *Iron City* steamed through choppy water along the coast of Ireland. Hour after hour the high green coast passed by — the long miles marked by bulging headlands. Each, when first seen, appeared to come no nearer; ship and headland moved together, carried on the same subaqueous belt. But

when attention was turned from the progress of the boat the headlands leapt up upon it and stopped again when the eye was turned upon them as if they played a game.

As the day dwindled, the long blinking beam of Fastnet Light rose in the west. The beam of this revolving star, like a gigantic compass describing an arc, traversed every few seconds a three hundred mile circle and yet found time in its passing to pierce the eyeball of Grimes, who looked at it, with a fierce, curious stare.

Summoned by this wonder, and still smelling of stale daylight sleep, up the forward hatchway rose the fate-sent Shank to ask, 'What light is that?'

'Fastnet,' said Grimes.

Shank looked while the night wind, sharp upon the forecandle-head, hewed his heavy frowsy hair into a sculptured grace. Then he turned away to walk a stretch down the deck and return. Thus he came at intervals, bringing his pale face to meet the swinging light, then turned again to vanish as if into another world. And each time he came Gideon asked a question and Shank replied, gradually drawing the picture of a life.

With an artificial tension produced by his periodic walks down the deck, from which he would return still more stirred by the contemplation of his past, Shank held his listener, there on the deck of the *Iron City*. A constantly freshening wind gave to the man's talk an ominous crescendo and the scene was unified by one powerful trait of the man which emerged slowly from his story.

This was a genius for taking care of himself in perilous situations — a genius for always attaching himself to the person who was best fitted to look after him — a genius which had thus far never forsaken him.

In Egypt during the War he had found a six-foot-five Australian. He had followed this man as a jackal does a lion; he had watched with furtive curiosity the unending process of satisfying the lion's appetites, and he had picked up the mouthfuls which were thrown aside as too small to fill the throat of his patron.

Into Arab villages where voluminous Arab women with tattooed faces beckoned, Shank followed Australia; he wet his feet where the big man wallowed; drank a glass where his companion drank a gallon; used the Australian's size and boldness to aid him in gleaning a small harvest of dissipation which Shank alone would never have

had the courage or impressiveness to find, and in the end he would take Australia home.

'Women listen,' said Shank, 'when six-foot-five speaks to them.'

On the bow of the battleship that the English were to beach as part of their desperate plan to land at Gallipoli, stood the big Australian. After the vessel had gently forced its keel into the smooth sand, he was one of the first over the gangplank toward shore, and one of the many to be killed on that gangplank — his superhuman appetites quenched by human death. Perhaps the last tremor of departing life woke the big man to consciousness once more, told him that, in his loneliness, many feet were stepping over him; then left him only time to curse the day that man was born to die. Perhaps, however, he never knew that Shank was not to take him home from this night of adventure as from the others.

Shank saw, and the bile of his belly was sour in his throat. Turkish lights and Turkish guns were trained upon the landing point. Shank knew that the other end of that plank did not lie on the beach but in unending unconsciousness.

Then he saw a few men running to the unnoticed and slightly more seaward side of the bow, from there they dropped into the water and swam ashore. This was the thin road out that fate always sent to Shank. He hurled himself over the side and fell feet first into the bloody water with a thick splash like a June-bug in a mug of beer. But he was soon gathering his feet under him in the shallow water, safely landed beyond the feline stare of the searchlights.

Fastnet Light was barely discernible now and as the *Iron City* left the sheltering coast of Ireland, the wind grew stronger. The ship took the waves on her quarter. She wallowed deeply while each wave rolled upward along her side toward the scuppers amidships. Then as the lifting power of the wave passed forward beneath the center of the boat, the stern fell back and the bow rose dripping and stars and shreds of cloud appeared beneath the ship's rail. The last step in the cycle was a shuffling falling movement as the ship fell backward and crabwise down the long back of the wave, while the wave cantered easily forward into the darkness like some unwieldy prehistoric animal wearing a small white nightcap of phosphorescent foam. The light upon the mast indicated upon the sky, as if with an extended little finger, an ellipse; and drew it neatly

to a close as each wave passed. Shank's talk ceased; he felt sick and went below.

Often during the next thirty-six hours Grimes watched Shank stick his head out of the port hole above his bunk. He looked at these moments like a mouse with its head in a trap, hind quarters protruding, passionately limp. He was very sick.

The fourth morning, however, was sunny with a light steadying headwind and Shank with a two-days' beard upon his face peered over the edge of his bunk with the light of life in his eye. After breakfast Shank followed Gideon up to the wheelhouse where it was sheltered — where the sun was tropical and where they lay half naked upon the deck. Here, stimulated by his sudden freedom from nausea and by his heavy drinking of tea, and hypnotized by the droning of the ship's propeller beneath them — Shank grew confidential.

'I've got a girl,' said Shank. 'And I've got money.'

He reached for his coat, stiffly, as one from death revived, and pulled out of it a worn imitation-leather wallet. From the wallet he drew a photograph and holding it in his wan yellow palm, he studied it for a long time. Grimes leaned over the man's shoulder to look at the picture and noticed that he smelt like an old man, and that the high sun made the hairs on his chest cast long shadows on his belly.

Gideon was looking down at the picture of a woman — Shank's 'girl.' Momentarily the bright day and all it showed to his eyes became a frame to the picture. The tarry pleasant smell of a bit of marlin he was twisting in his hands perfumed the moment.

There was a long silence, for the face before Grimes was beautiful. The face of that woman had the seductive patience of a fair weather sea. It was a smooth-skinned face, deeply shadowed beneath the eyes which were lighter than the surrounding skin. The hair was heavy, like the flow of oil, and was drawn back from the round cheeks to leave the pale ears showing. The woman wore a round-necked dress with a collar that lay smooth upon it and a sort of coif above her smooth crown. The points of her shoulders were thrown forward slightly so that there was an area above a full deep bosom which was slightly concave.

'There's the girl,' said Shank, and added abruptly, 'She's a trained nurse.'

'Now,' said Shank, 'I'll tell ye how I got the money.' So he began, blinking at the wide ocean with his eyes that made only the knight's move.

The new regiment to which, after Gallipoli and toward the end of the war, Shank was shifted was in a camp, close behind the lines in France. In this regiment there was a man who owned a roulette wheel. Daily this man spread out the marked cloth that was the board and amid an attendant circle he spun the wheel and was the banker — but Shank was the croupier.

And Shank was glad to be croupier for he felt that he won, himself, and yet at no risk; the banker in turn permitted Shank's offices good humoredly at first and then as his game grew larger depended on them. The banker was Sergeant Cooper — a man with a squat frame and a huge U-shaped smile and a nose that plunged down between the upright arms of the U. His smile parted his lips from one corner of his mouth to the other; it looked like a horseshoe turned upright for luck.

One night a soldier came hurrying to the grinning sergeant's group to say that the regiment was ordered forward.

On the following night Shank got himself settled comfortably in a front-line trench. After settling himself he took a walk down the trench to pay a call and to ask a question. He called on a second lieutenant whom he had known before and who had been given a command which included Sergeant Cooper. His question was, 'How's Sergeant Cooper?' 'Oh, he's fine,' replied the lieutenant, and Shank retired.

Regularly once a day for four days Shank made this inquiry and at last on the fourth day the answer he sought was given him.

'I sent Cooper out this morning with a couple of men, to look around, and he didn't come back. They all got separated and Cooper's two men don't know what became of him.' Shank thanked the lieutenant and returned to his place.

He shed no tears for the good sergeant whose wheel had given so much pleasure to so many and so much profit to its owner and who somewhere in No Man's Land had encountered a run on the bank.

'I got back then quick to my post.' Shank went on, and he waited at his post until full darkness, then crawled over the parapet and began, on hands and knees, a search for Sergeant Cooper.

Now and then a star shell went up and caught the thin little man turning over a corpse with his hand for a better look at the face. Instantly he would crouch and be like the dead man himself, using the light, however, for a glance at the dead face, looking eagerly for that horseshoe smile.

Shank told Grimes that it was safer to be in No Man's Land than in a trench, if you knew the shell holes, for there was less shelling there and less sniping.

Sometimes Shank could tell by the smell of a body that it was not that of Sergeant Cooper, for Cooper had not been dead long. Sometimes Shank must have turned over one that still retained life enough to roll a comprehending eye; but he never said this. Perhaps he crept quickly away when this happened, disliking the suspicious glance of these men whose problem was suddenly so far removed from his and who were already cooling in the final chill. He would then have had to come back when such a man had died to make sure that none of them was Cooper. He continued with perseverance his squirming inspection of that dark rat-ridden graveyard for the unburied, returning in the gray of morning.

Thus the man worked to rob the dead. And when Gideon said this Shank turned upon him and said dropping his 'H' as he seldom did: 'Well, 'oo are the dead?'

'It was the third night,' said Shank, 'I found him, and in the pocket of his tunic the money, mostly coins.'

Shank took the grinning sergeant's identification disk, his money and his wrist watch and warily returned to the home trench. He was not one to believe fortune a friend because fortune had done him a favor. . . .

Shank's voice had stopped and the regular beat of the propeller upon the water now became noticeable. It rose, this sound, to take the place of Shank's voice, to fill in the interval as water runs into a depression, leveling it off. The small waves ran out from the wake, upon the surface of the ocean, as upon a hard surface; and the sound of them came regularly as upon a beach. The long straight wake appeared to have been once a flowing substance, long since congealed, though retaining still the pattern of its boiling. It lay now behind the ship like a fault in the surface of a vast blue earth. Shank pulled a layer of skin-like red paint off the deck and made no further move to speak. The slow strong pulse of calm weather beat everywhere about them.

While Grimes fidgeted, Shank slept, and between the blue concentric spheres of sky and ocean, three white birds appeared, painted when they flew high a yellowed amber by the late afternoon light and reflecting the blue light from the ocean on their bellies when they flew low. The birds looked like tubby cigars with a stiff unjointed wing, shaped like a razor blade attached to each side of the center of the cigar. With wings as unmoving as if transfixed by the taxidermist's wire, these birds apparently freed from the laws of gravity rose and fell in the air. Going nowhere, seeking no food, they were only superficially appropriate, the touch of a landlubber's brush upon the afternoon marine.

The birds passed on ahead of the ship, outdistancing it as did the sun and the lazy waves. One bird before it disappeared swept toward the boat and passed over it, casting thus a momentary shadow, like a mask, across Shank's eyes. With the passing of the shadow and the resuming of the glare of the sun upon his face, Shank opened his eyes and looked at once at Gideon. He started, feeling guilty at having been caught thus staring at Shank while he slept.

'I've been thinking the face of that girl was familiar, Shank. Just let me have another glance at the photo, will you?' Gideon repeated these words to himself trying to find the casual emphasis.

When at last he spoke the question aloud, Shank said, 'What girl?'

'I mean the photo of the trained nurse you showed me.'

'You don't know her,' said Shank, as if to close the conversation.

But Grimes persisted, 'Let me see it at any rate.'

'What the Jesus for?' mumbled Shank; but he unfolded his coat and reached into the inner pocket. Then at last he placed that beautiful victim in Gideon's hand.

Gideon looked but did not dare to gaze too long. Passing the photo back he said, 'What's her name?'

'She's Mary Slade,' said Shank.

Before Grimes slept that night he dared to ask Shank another question. 'Shank,' he said, 'where is she now, your friend Mary Slade?'

And at this Shank rose out of his bunk, and Grimes saw his head silhouetted against the portal which showed, a round gray hole in

the surrounding darkness. 'Say,' said Shank, 'you're struck on that picture, ain't you?'

Grimes saw as he examined the silhouette from the shelter of his dark bunk that Shank was right; Gideon was struck on Mary Slade.

At last the silhouette vanished and Grimes saw the round port unbroken once more; the straw of Shank's mattress hissed dryly with the movement of his body and Shank's voice said, 'She's in Blackwell. A town in the east of England.' No more was said that night.

What had taken seed on the fourth day, on the fifth grew rankly, so that the position of Shank as tyrant keeper of the well was a thing established by night. This was natural since Shank and Grimes were day and night together, and had no occupation to keep them from continual consciousness of one another's thoughts; and since there could come no other woman's face to divert these two from the voluptuous contemplation of the face of Mary Slade.

Furthermore it was necessary for Shank not to displease Grimes too much for at disembarkation comes another time when the stowaway must have a man to assist him. Someone must carry his duffle ashore, leaving him in hiding aboard until nightfall, when he can walk off unquestioned by the authorities on shore. Once ashore, he can look up his accomplice, get his baggage, and depart about his business. For this task Grimes was the ideal man. And the desire of Grimes's fingers to know exactly the temperature of the gray opalescent fine-textured skin on Mary Slade's throat was Shank's assurance.

On the sixth day of the voyage the *Iron City* passed in the late afternoon a ship headed back to England. The smokestack of this vessel was a rich weathered pink that shone out even at a great distance. The smoke from the vessel's funnel rose gently upward — for the wind was on her quarter — and then lay in a huge flimsy cloud above the ship. Thoughtful and brooding, as if with a distracted eye upon the ship, the cloud appeared like a mother who patiently slows her pace for the child that bustles by her hand. Other shreds of cloud, fatigued by their defeat at the hands of the sunny day, struggled down the sky and made a white background for the dark brooding smoke.

On one of the *Iron City's* tarpaulin-covered hatches a stoker sat,

his face was pasty, his eyes were darkened about the lashes by coal dust imperfectly removed. He looked like a great actor wearied and resting after the playing of a tragic role. He crooned upon a harmonica softly to the receding day and noiselessly dusk gathered in the zenith.

And Gideon, too, sat there on the hatch and watched the ship go slowly back to England. Shank sat beside him.

'That ship,' said Shank, 'will be steaming up the Mersey in a week and if ye were aboard her ye'd be in Blackwell the same day.'

'I'll go back there, as soon as I get to America,' said Grimes. It was a threat, but Shank laughed. He laughed first silently with his lower jaw agape, like the swinging jaw of a steam shovel; then he laughed through his nose, noisily and with his mouth wide open and his stinking breath pouring out between his rotten teeth. Then he banged the tragic actor on the back and asked him did he hear that. The harmonica sputtered, uttered a discord and then resumed exactly where it left off . . . 'save the king.'

Then in the full early night, while Shank beside him dreamed not of the deadly thrust he made at him, Grimes swore to himself to visit Blackwell as soon as he could get back to England. Shank in silence enjoyed Grimes's despondent air. He did not know that Gideon's oath made him like a man pushed from a cliff-top; as yet unharmed, he fell through space.

Shank felt a need to play upon Grimes's admiration for Mary and thus to assure himself of Gideon's protection. Every time that Grimes was permitted to see the picture of Mary, and this was really often though never without preliminary resistance, Shank accompanied the revelation of the beautiful face with a new tale of the woman's extraordinary humbleness. These relations coming with the sight of the picture as they did, filled Grimes with envy and passion. This made Shank exaggerate. None the less, the succession of anecdotes as the days passed built a picture detailed and essentially truthful.

Mary's strength drew her to Shank's weakness. The more she battled for him and against him, the more she had at stake and the further she was from leaving him. She was like a mother persisting in her love for a vicious child.

During the War the poor women of Blackwell had been organ-

ized to do a share in the war work. They knitted and rolled bandages; and Mary, whose hands were quick, soon began to be noticed. A hospital was started in the neighborhood, and Mary's capabilities soon drew her out of her natural sphere and into another. Mary became a trained nurse.

As a nurse Mary was distinguished by her calm strength. She tended her patients placidly, disregarding their complaints, her mind fixed only on the signs of their recovery.

The war ended. Mary Slade returned to Blackwell; and when Shank returned also, all her natural affection and all her newly acquired gift for watching over the unreasonable flowed out upon him. In this nerve-racking atmosphere of endless patience Shank soon grew restless again.

There was still one other chapter in the six-day epic of Shank's leechdom. It was apparently almost a final scene in that part of Shank's life which preceded his brief acquaintance with Grimes. The effect of its telling upon Gideon's mind was subtle and final. It grew into his mind during the next day of the voyage like roots into soft earth laying a fine fatal tendril on every particle. For it showed to Grimes how the fear of dying hung over Shank, excluding consideration for the world. It made Grimes feel strong — he seemed to hold a weapon built and weighted to his hand. . . .

During the summer following the peace Shank was finally mustered out of France and crossed the Channel on his way to Blackwell. He found among the troops that accompanied him another man who was also going to Blackwell. With this man Shank made friends. They had drunk many drinks together by the time Blackwell was reached and Shank had shown his friend the picture of Mary. Meanwhile Shank had thought of a joke with which to celebrate his homecoming.

'Go to her house and tell her I'm dead,' said Shank.

Shank's friend, a handsome man, impressed by Mary's beauty and feeling that the embrace of a handsome man is often a quick road away from grief for the death of a runt, consented — already feeling the soft skin of Mary on his lips.

The handsome man went to the house where Mary lived and spoke his piece and Mary wept at the news and screamed under his kisses and he fled.

Such was Shank's joke — and Shank waited at a nearby saloon to hear the outcome. His friend, of course never bothered to report and Shank after waiting and drinking set out for Mary's house himself. The woman who came to the door in answer to Shank's ring said that Mary had left the house. Shank knew Blackwell and knew where she would have gone. Shank was pretty drunk but he kept walking. Just outside of the town the road crossed a brook and at its crossing there was a break in the hedge that bordered the road and a footway ran through it along the side of the brook. The path ended where the brook crossed another road a mile further along its course. Here Shank and Mary had walked in the early days of Shank's courting.

Unsteadily then Shank walked down this path in search of his beautiful Mary. He found her remembering in torture the kisses of the handsome man, and wondering in yet greater pain if the terrible story he had told her was true.

Shank's snuffling laugh announced to Mary his return from death, for the sight of Mary's grief was funny to him. Shaken with laughter he half fell, half willingly sat down in the coarse strong-growing grass at the brook's edge. Mary seeing him ran to him, crouched beside him pressing her wet face upon his in joy. Shank laughed on, and between drunken giggles explained his joke. Mary was not a woman to spank a long-lost child because he had run away. She was glad of Shank's return and went on kissing him. Under her kisses his gloating suddenly turned from mirth to heat.

The soft upper edge of Mary's breast might just have showed at the pointed neck of her dress — so Grimes thought where its smooth arch sprang from her chest. It might have looked in the half light of the long twilight a gray cream color — soft and giving way elusively under the touch as if the skin actually floated upon a smooth rich liquid.

Shank's breath smelling of stale beer warmed Mary's neck; perhaps she saw in his face more human emotion than she had seen for many years. Thus the picture was before Grimes's eyes when Shank paused to grab the shoulder of the intent listener, startling him so that he shivered. 'Wot 'appened then? 'ere's wot 'appened — a goddam rabbit, his guts aswim with fear, scrambled clean over the two of us' — as intent upon its separate terror as Shank upon the soft throat of Mary. But here something had laid hold of Mary.

Suddenly the smell of decaying vegetation in the brook bed, the reasonless cancerous profusion of growth all about her, smothered for a moment the intentness of her love of Shank. She stopped him in mid-caress.

While he paused, the rabbit, still near, began to scream; the enemy that had invisibly pursued had now caught up. The rabbit gave forth a series of cries each less strong, a significant diminishing, without emotion, a purely mechanical announcement that that which was alive understood that it was losing in agony all the world of created things. The mad desire to go on living, the great condition of all life, was in the presence of Mary and Shank undergoing the final chastening which it was born to meet, the ultimate agony which dwarfs all joy. Shank felt Mary's body stiffen and relax as if the outcry were her own and Shank's hand, like a scaled lizard, withdrew cringing from that dim and oddly cool chamber between Mary's breasts where it had crept.

Between that time and the time of his seeking out the *Iron City*, Shank did not again make love to Mary Slade. Death had wagged a finger at him. He was impressed by his bad luck. Perhaps he had hoped the *Iron City* would wall it out, but it had walled it in. Grimes, too, feared it and felt himself shaken by a strange anticipatory tremble, like a bride before her lover, but the embrace that now encircled him was sinister and invisible.

'Does Mary know why you have gone or where?' asked Grimes.

'I'll write,' said Shank, 'when I'm well ready.'

There were two things only which served to make one day different from the next aboard the *Iron City*. The weather and the photograph of Mary Slade. The rotation of stew and hash was as monotonous and as inevitable as the turn of the ship's propeller. The rotation of distant officers upon the bridge was the same. One had a beard, one had a mustache, one was clean-shaven. These faces appeared against the sky in a succession as imperturbable as the alternation of sun and moon against the same sky, and the faces seemed, if anything, more distant. Sun and moon and officers and hash all moved like figures on an elaborate clock to the rhythmic, melodious, distant sound of the ship's bells.

But the weather and the photograph were full of change. They maintained an interrelationship of mood, an irrelevant coquettish-

ness. They smiled then sneered; they played tricks with time, they spun the moon in its orbit at will; they rang the ship's bells and toyed with the succession of beards and mustaches. Gideon was bound by their spell day and night. He was alone with the *Iron City* surrounded by hallucinations; he sailed in an empty sea.

By the eighth day Mary was flesh and blood for Grimes and he had set up about her picture all those fetishes of love that men set up about the moods of real women.

It was a cruel tyranny. He tried to think of a way by which he might break it. In the first place he might steal the photograph. When Shank discovered its absence, he would become infuriated — for he would thus lose a hostage for his security, and the implement with which, in this dull interval, he tortured Grimes. He would realize just where his picture had gone and Grimes would not dare sleep in a room with a man thus enraged who was moreover in possession of a bag of murderous tackler's tools — mechanic's hammers nicely weighted, punches and the like. If he dared not sleep with Shank after the theft, so Grimes reasoned, he should have to get rid of him, and this he might do by hastily informing the ship's officers of the presence of a stowaway aboard the ship. This scheme would leave Grimes quit of Shank and in possession of the photograph.

In the darkness of the eighth night — stimulated by the wheezing of the unconscious Shank — Grimes plotted on. A stowaway is put in the brig and he goes back with the ship to his native port. Shank would go back to England and very likely, after a short jail term, back to Mary. Grimes, without money, having to work his passage back, could hardly get there before Shank. It would not do to expose Shank.

Here the sleeping Shank paused in his wheezing to moisten his lips and for Gideon from this thought there arose another anxiety. Suppose Shank were to lose the photograph? He would be quite as sure that Grimes had taken it, as if he really had, and Grimes would be in the same danger of violence.

On the ninth day of the voyage a new piece of information was thrust at Gideon. The finger of God appeared and pointed to it.

Early in the ninth night Shank and Grimes stood on the fo'c'sle head. The wind was behind the ship so that it was comfortable to be in the bow. Two figures moved silently on the bridge. A third

man was tinkering with the searchlight on the bridge; it went on and off at rare intervals; a lantern was near him to light his work.

There were only two topics of conversation between Grimes and Shank now. There was the problem of getting Shank ashore, and there was Mary Slade.

'Mary's a fine big woman,' said Shank. He drew out his wallet. 'If the searchlight comes on again ye might have a look.' Grimes tried in the half darkness to prepare his eyes to take advantage of every moment of light by filling them in advance with the image of the photograph so that no time should be wasted in recognition of details already sufficiently impressed on his mental eye. Thus his eye was fixed upon Shank's hands that held his wallet and the photograph. Many moments passed but the light was not turned on. After awhile it went on and shone out over the water throwing only a reflected grayness upon the photograph.

Shank and Grimes waited, but at last Shank grew tired and began to put it back in its place. As he was doing this and while Gideon's eyes still stared at his hands, a rod of light leapt into the air. It did not progress from the searchlight and illuminate Shank's hands. It was dropped into place whole, one end rested in the socket of the searchlight on the bridge, the other rested on the wallet in Shank's hands and slipped a tributary beam into every crevice and pocket in it. The finger of light pointed into the long pocket at the back of the wallet. There, deep in the bowels of the greasy wallet, ephemeral, perishable, Grimes perceived two notes of the Bank of England. The bar of light vanished, not sucked in like a lizard's tongue, but lifted out of place whole and instantaneously; and put down somewhere else out of sight. Grimes had not fixed his anxious gaze upon Mary's face, but what had he seen?

In the darkness that follows blinding light and that slowly returns again to the normal gray like blood returning to a frightened face, Grimes saw that Shank's eyes were fixed upon his and that they asked him that same question.

Grimes had not envisaged the winnings of Sergeant Cooper in the form of two bank notes in Shank's pocket. He had supposed the money hidden or in a bank. Now it appeared to be within reach of his hand. That money, could he procure it, would see him back to England at once.

After an interval Shank went below but Grimes remained where

he was. Smoke, black and angry, was pushed out of the funnel and blown forward above him darkening the night. The many sounds of the traveling ship made in his ear a monotonous whisper, a woven harlequin pattern of sound unheard. An ocean of jet asparkle with gray highlights stood before his eyes unseen. Eyes and ears turned inwards and fixed themselves upon one thought. When Grimes took the photograph from Shank, he must also take the money.

He saw himself upon the bridge telling the two men about the stowaway. He saw an officer asking him why he had not reported this sooner; he heard Shank's voice saying that he had only done it now because he had taken Shank's money; Grimes saw himself locked with Shank below decks. While Shank had a voice, a memory, while Shank was on the ship, Grimes would not be safe.

Then, upon that instant, Shank must have no voice, no memory; he must leave the ship.

From every angle both in space and in time, Gideon saw a long line of circumstances converging with a fitness born of fatality upon the deed of murder. No one knew that Shank was aboard the *Iron City*. A day or so before the vessel's arrival in harbor it was necessary that Shank disappear so that when the final roundup came he would be well hidden, waiting for evening to enable him to slip off the ship unseen. When Shank was no longer on the ship, Grimes would only have to say to his companions, who knew Shank as a stowaway, that Shank had begun his term of hiding. Grimes then would walk off the vessel when it made port with Shank's duffle as already arranged and who was to know that Shank, who had been last seen in Blackwell, had met death upon the grand banks of Newfoundland?

The heavy bag of tools, the mechanic's hammer, now seemed to Gideon as providential as the revelation of the money and the chance of having come to know the photograph.

With this thought of violence tightening its unfamiliar grip upon him, Gideon waited upon the bow beneath the heavy train of smoke that went into the west. Its mass concealed him, its hot breath warmed him. He wanted to go beneath it, toward the shore. He felt that the smoke would guide him, and conceal him from the stars. He saw himself upon a bicycle outdistancing the ship, riding upon the sea with Shank already done to death in stealth.

He climbed down the iron stairway to the castle deck. At the

foot of it was the doorway to that four-bunk cabin which Shank and he had so successfully held against their companions. The round brass ring that was a doorknob stared at him as soon as he had stepped off the last step; he laid hand upon it; he stepped over the high sill and closed the door behind him. Into the deeper blackness of the cabin the grayer light of the open night flowed from the portal over Shank's bunk and lit with a faint austere light the head that Gideon hoped to crush, forty-eight hours hence; the eyes, their uneven flicker of deceit now vanished, moved idly beneath their lids. The faithful, forward motion of the ship gave peace. Shank's face wore the composed yet faintly drawn expression of a death mask. Below the gray calm sharpened face Gideon saw, as his eyes became accustomed to yet deeper shades of night, protruding from the bunk beneath Shank's, the handle of his mechanic's hammer.

Grimes undressed silently so as not to wake Shank. He climbed into his bunk. He did not sleep. Hour upon hour his muscles twitched with the effort of wielding that hammer. He caught it with both hands and swung it above his head, but found he had swung it too freely and the metal girder above Shank's bunk rang where the blow fell. He realized that he could not strike as he would drive a spike with a sledge. He struck again, with a more circumspect swing, the blow fell strong upon the face of Shank, but the high side of the bunk was struck by the handle of his weapon at the same time that its head struck the sleeping face, the force of the blow was broken, it was not fatal, it did not even stun. Gideon wiped the slate clean again, and the next time he stood upon the lower bunk giving himself thus height from which to strike. His stroke this time was very cramped but the hammer was heavy, it shattered the skull like cardboard. It caught inside the hole it had made and could not easily be withdrawn. Gideon did not have the remotest idea how much force a skull would resist nor did he know how it would resist. Was it like a hen's egg, he wondered, or like a turtle's egg? A last time he rehearsed the blow and this time he used the flat of the hammer and was successful. Would there be blood, he wondered? Was it a sure way to kill a man?

The ship traveled methodically on. It carried Shank and Gideon; and it carried all about Gideon a thousand other Shanks all variously mutilated and resisting his hammer. The room was crowded with their forms, they overlapped. There was one form with many

heads; not one was whole. Gideon suffered the tortures of one who repents a crime. Yet he had not as yet committed any crime and certainly did not regret it. In the light of morning he resolved against the business and then slept.

Grimes opened his eyes, puffed with short hours of stuffy sleep. He knew at once that his life had become an unpleasant business. He looked forward to the day with dread and to all days. He sought in his mind for the reason and found at once the feeling of the murder of Shank, hastily following down the thoughts of the passed day, to overtake the present, he found his mind too slow for his anxiety. He rose out of his bed and hastily and fearfully looked into Shank's bunk. Shank lay there asleep. Grimes was at once overjoyed and disappointed: the situation was unchanged. He had nothing to fear today that he did not have to fear yesterday; he had no new hope today. Then in the same moment he remembered the outcome of the night's deliberations — he had decided not to kill Shank. He was free.

From the breakfast of sluggish gruel, stiffened bread, dusty butter, brightened only by the sunny light of marmalade, the untouchables on the tenth day arose and went on deck. The sun drew them up as it drew the light mists that lay here and there upon the ocean, like clouds dozing.

Grimes chose the forward end of the ship. He paced back and forth on the windward side of the deck and slowly he felt purged of the night. For this tenth day was lively. In its light all things moved lightly, briskly — waves, clouds, sun and ship. The officer on the bridge moved quickly. He minced as if he walked a treadmill which supplied the power for the sprightly motion of the world around him. There in the ship's bow, Shank found Grimes, and crept away again frightened by his fierce silence.

Grimes stood staring at the flat sea as it came toward the ship. The boat was stationary, only the sea moved. Someone behind drew the huge flat sheet of water toward the vessel. The sheet was torn asunder in its exact center by the bow of the stationary boat. The material parted with a faint hiss. The dark scar of those parted edges showed behind the ship as far as the eye could see. Grimes watched the roll come toward him from the west. The lunch hour came and passed, he did not go below. The sea grew flatter. The cloth ran from the bolt smoothly and still more smoothly. The sun

leapt with one exuberant bound into the zenith and through the bright morning. There it stood as still as if Grimes were a Joshua and while it stood there and while the sea grew calm it waned, it paled. It was like a last ember in the grate at which you warm your hands. It died in mid-leap and before the day had reached maturity, it had dwindled into a premature and waxy twilight.

Then at last as the day faded and night stood close — Grimes perceived the end of the bolt on which the smooth ocean was wound, the loom from which it came. For all about there now appeared wisps of mist, string-like shreds of vapor rising from the taut silken surface. And while Grimes watched, the ship was swallowed in the machinery of the loom. It plunged into a wall of fog.

Grimes now found himself in a new, cramped world, a world hardly bigger than the ship itself, and far from other worlds. Heralding this accomplished passage out of the world that Grimes knew, came an enormous sound. It filled the fog-bound sphere in which the ship was cased. This sound flowed alike between the particles of air and the particles of Gideon's body. It was as loud in his stomach as in the air above his head. It drew his knees toward his chin in a convulsion of fear. Upon the bridge the officer with a mustache had drawn down the wire that ran up the fog horn upon the funnel. Summoned by that trumpet of doom, Gideon went to his cabin scarce knowing whether he was judge or judged and fearing to be either.

He was too late for supper. He could only crawl shivering between his blankets; and his belly made savage with hunger paced within him like a caged cat and at two-minute intervals throughout the night his whole body was dissolved in sound.

At every blast throughout the unrelenting night, Gideon's eyes leapt open. Morning came again, the eleventh morning, and as the sun rose higher the fog withdrew, not altogether but to a good distance — a besieging army which takes counsel after an unexpected rebuff. The fog horn ceased its braying. The wind had not risen since it had dropped twenty hours before. There was no sound of waves rebounding from iron flanks, no grunting of strained bolts; the ship moved stealthily. Relieved from the tension produced by the blasts of the horn which seemed to demand an accounting of him, Gideon fell asleep.

The morning passed. After lunch, feeling more cheerful, Grimes returned on deck with Shank. The sun was losing its strength, the boat still skated upon a stricken sea. Then the sun vanished altogether and the world, bounded by fog, shrank. With this new contraction of the cage surrounding Grimes and Shank, announcing their approach to a fog-bound Newfoundland, announcing the beginning of the end of the voyage, the separation of Grimes from Shank and consequently the separation of Grimes from the picture of Mary, came a scream from the fog horn and Grimes jumped the more because this time he saw the sound was coming, but could not tune his ears to its loudness. He winced before it as if it were a cry for help that called him into danger. In two minutes the scream came again and yet again the fog came closer and the afternoon crept on, two minutes at a time.

A half hour later there came out of the fog another sign of the approaching end of the voyage. Four gulls signifying anew the nearness of land appeared in the ship's wake. Two of the birds cackled malevolently, one wailed melodiously and pityingly, and one made a sound that was like the voice of a woman. This voice, low, smooth and rich, was raised in speech but before it had time to articulate it halted as if embarrassed by emotion. Unmoved, however, by threat or tears the ship slid slowly forward and the afternoon drew to a close.

After supper with the world about the *Iron City* even more constricted by darkness, that arrived to re-enforce the fog, Grimes went to the wheel house. Here also came Shank. They leaned upon the ship's rail together. The voices of the gulls spoke to them of the end of the strange voyage watched over by the beauty of Mary Slade. 'Shank,' said Grimes, finally, 'let's have a look at Mary before it's too dark.'

Shank reached into his inner pocket and brought out his wallet. He held it in his hand. Grimes waited and under the pressure of Shank's delay he added another plea. 'Give me the picture,' he said. 'You'll never give happiness more easily.'

'I can give it easier to Mary,' said Shank, but he drew from the wallet the picture — he was about to do as Grimes asked.

Holding the small white square between his hands, his elbows on the rail, and hands above the wake of the ship, his deliberations produced the effect of a pause. During this pause, while Grimes

was putting forth a hand to receive from Shank the photograph, Shank let slip the picture of Mary just before Gideon's fingers could close upon it. While the face of Mary was still visible to Gideon, the falling photograph was far beyond his reach, as irrevocably removed as are the living from the dead. Mary was gone.

With her went Grimes's tolerance of Shank. He began to get angry. Shank laughed at the accident. He, in that moment, reached the peak of his power over Grimes. Had some breath of wind played the final trick that Shank dared not play, yet now he could laugh and appear as if he had permitted the accident.

Grimes was helpless. 'God damn you, Shank,' he said. 'You bastard.' He sought for some supreme blasphemy, there was none; only the daily oaths came to his tongue.

Shank savored the impotent insults, they rolled down his scraggy throat as easily as they shot up from Grimes's. Grimes rattled the loose ship's rail in his hand. He stamped his foot. Then suddenly a great feeling of freedom rolled over him; there was now no reason to preserve the forms of friendship with Shank. He had tolerated Shank's nauseous personality in order that he might be permitted to look at the picture of Mary. What reason was there for Grimes to control his dislike now? And Shank's laughs were echoed by Grimes's own. Shank stopped in surprise. Grimes, watching, grew cold and deliberate.

'You think you've got Mary, Shank,' he said. 'Why do you think I've asked questions about her? Why do I know her address and where she works: because I'm going back to Blackwell and get her. I'm going to have her now, not you. What's more, you're going to be damn polite the rest of this voyage or I'll tell an officer you're a stowaway and you'll be starved below decks handcuffed so you can't brush off the rats. Damn you, Shank.'

Shank might have tried to hit Gideon then; but Grimes turned and left him.

The fog horn split the silence. Its two-minute interval had just bracketed the scene. It hurried Gideon on his way.

The fog about the ship shut out sound and sight and air and held in the demon who yelled in the cabin. Grimes slept; awoke and perceived that not yet had Shank come to bed. Why in hell was he up so late? Was he out behind the wheelhouse, terrified by threats and wondering how he could escape exposure?

One more night and the *Iron City* would raise Highland Light; the fog horn bellowed, there might be fishing schooners near.

What was Shank thinking? Gideon asked himself. Then he saw. 'Where's my Buddy, did ye ask?' Shank would say to the fo'c'sle cook, 'e's going to hide out this last day. Let me get his landing card. The officers don't know one of us for another. I'll get ashore, then he'll have his passport, says he can manage all right.' It wasn't a very good idea, but who would think about it, and where would Gideon be? Gideon asked in the dark cabin and Gideon answered. He would be overboard with the hammer thrown after, gone the way he had thought of sending Shank. Shank would have his papers, passport and all. It was simple; that was what Shank was thinking. He, who had crawled about in the cold blood of dead men, would not fumble the doing. He simply waited for Gideon to go to sleep. 'I must not sleep,' thought Gideon.

He turned on the light to help him stay awake. He lay and blinked at the dull light. Now the blaring fog horn became a lullaby. When it blew, its loudness suspended the action of Gideon's senses and held his eyes closed. They flew open again as soon as the sound ceased to tell him if Shank had come into the room. There was a perceptible time between the moment at which Gideon's eyes flew open and the succeeding temporary allaying of his fears. During this moment he could visualize the form of Shank, head and shoulders leaning over his bunk, hammer poised flat side toward his head. Feverishly Gideon's brain would hasten to compare this anticipated image with what his eyes actually saw. When he found that they did not coincide, his terror was allayed for two minutes more but when his eyes closed again the hammer rose as before and his scalp crawled upon his skull, awaiting the shock. He rubbed the place.

Then he dozed and dreamed.

He dreamed that he opened his eyes, that he hastened to compare as always the two images, the one that he feared with the one that he actually beheld and that he found to his utter terror that they exactly coincided. This time with certainty and in spite of the fact that his eyes were surely open he still beheld the thin wrist, the bony hand with fingers whitened by the strength of the grip upon the handle of the heavy hammer. He tried to grab the wrist, to shout. He writhed in his bunk in a death agony and then he over-

came the force that held shut his eyes. The deafening horn which held him asleep suddenly ceased, his eyelids flew up; and waking he beheld neither the familiar sight of the iron girder above his bunk or the anticipated grim face and upraised hammer. He beheld nothing. The room was dark. The light had been turned out.

Was Shank there above him? He did not know. He rose up. He could see only the round port, dimly gray. He got out of his bunk and he reached into the bunk below Shank's to see if the hammer were there. He felt the handle; why had he not thought to possess himself of it before? Next, he stood upon the edge of the lower bunk and looked into Shank's bunk to see if he were there. He was there, and in the faint light from the port his eyes showed dark in the lighter tone of his face. They were open. He must be seeing Gideon leaning over him with the hammer in his hand. He would kill Gideon. Gideon must strike while sleep still stifled his mind, if not his sight. Gideon brought down the hammer flat side foremost, swinging short from his elbow to avoid the girder: Shank tried to shout; sleep still held him for one split instant more. The flat side of the hammer struck the head. It was not like a hen's egg; it was not like a turtle's egg; it was like an apple inside a sock.

The fog horn blew again. It was two minutes since Gideon had got out of his bunk.

Gideon shuddered and — rolled in his blankets. Shank too shuddered, as if the idea of death were repugnant to him. Gideon did not dare to touch Shank's heart to see if he were dead; instead he put his heavy blanket over Shank's head so that if he should not be dead and should groan the sound would be muffled. Then Gideon dressed, and went to the galley.

This part was simple and Gideon was quick, for he had thought it out before. In the galley was a sackful of potato peelings and the galley was empty. Gideon took the sack to his cabin quickly lest Shank should be alive. Shank had not moved. He emptied the sack on the floor of the cabin.

Then he climbed laboriously into the top bunk and straddling the warm form of Shank which, for all he knew, might still be alive, he shudderingly pulled the blanket from Shank's head and all in one motion hurled it to the floor among the potato peelings. The head was still and Gideon saw that it was queerly shaped. He pulled the bag hastily over it, then down to the waist of the limp little man.

In the end, after lifting the whole unwieldy burden to the floor, he was able to shake the whole of the man, Shank, in an inverted squat down into the bag. He tried not to jounce the crushed head too hard upon the floor in doing this. Once he waited for the blare of the fog horn to conceal the sound of his operation. When the little man was in the bag, Gideon shoved his tool kit in after him, tying it to one ankle. He got the burden onto his shoulder by resting it on an upper bunk, paused adjusting the weight and it seemed to him that the pulse of the ship's engine went slower. The world became still more quiet; between the blasts of the fog horn there was no sound in the world but the expiring distant beat of the ship's engine.

Gideon opened the door of the cabin and peered out as well as he could with that awkward hundred-odd pounds upon his shoulder. He saw no one, once out of his room he was all right or almost. He might have been working late for the cook and now be carrying the week's collection of potato peels to the door in the ship's side to throw it out. He staggered out upon the darkened under deck.

The concrete floor was slippery with dampness of the fog. Bent as Shank had been bent that first day in Liverpool when he came down the dock with his duffle bag, Gideon walked uncertainly aft. Before he had taken two steps the dying rhythm of the ship's engine ceased altogether. Silence fell upon the world. Gideon, too, felt forced to stop, his bundle settled upon his shoulder as if making itself comfortable. Now creeping up behind Gideon came that deadly brazen shout. The bridge again! Gideon started aft in the dead ship with a dead burden nestling to him and there came to him now a faint answering bellow, as if spectators were assembling, for the burial of Shank at sea.

Gideon came to the door in the side of the ship. The whole unrippling ocean waited to hear the sound of Shank's plunge. He lowered the bag to the deck and waited for the salute from the bridge which would conceal the sound of the splash. In the sluggish sea the ship was losing way. Across the water came the answering bleat. He knew that the call of the *Iron City* would follow soon. He got ready. 'Get set,' it said to him and GO cried the signal from the bridge.

Forward and outward fell the bag. Gideon leaned over and grasped the two lower corners and whipped back his body. That shrivelled parasite, Grimes's strange companion, Shank, fell free of

the bag, unsheltered by any shroud, into the ocean which quivered now beneath the *Iron City's* brazen blast. As Shank struck the water it seemed to Gideon to fall away beneath, forming momentarily a smooth bowl-like cradle for the huddled form, a cradle festooned about its edges with a pale fire of phosphorescence. Then the water grew calm above the spot where Shank had fallen. He sank slowly, dragged down by the feet to which Gideon had tied the kit of tools. The face looked up and Gideon could see it; for phosphorescent bubbles issued from the nose and mouth and escaped from the hair and drew in livid light the outline of a bodiless, eyeless face.

While Gideon looked down thus and Shank looked up there came, winding like a garter snake through tall grass a gigantic serpent of light, a curious fish which left behind it a trail of phosphorescence and was drawn by this sudden commotion in the sea. For one final instant the upturned face seemed like the head of this serpentine body, like the fabulous serpent of the garden of Eden human-headed; then all was lost in a knot of fiery coils which fell shining into a hell of velvet in the shadow of the ship.

Gideon straightened his aching back and turned about. Little Shank was gone like big Australia, a cockroach in a mug of beer.

In the end it was light. Grimes got himself on deck. He rose, still stupid with the shock of murder, out of the darkness and stench of the ship, out of the cabin where the smell of Shank's living body still hung, into the opalescent misty morning. The fog had retreated somewhat and the fog horn no longer blew. He went to the rail and looked upon the sea. No wind stirred it; yet everywhere there was life. As far as he could see, spread out at geometrically even intervals like fleur-de-lis on a wall paper, there were small black and white birds. They could not rise off the water because the day was still. They rested each in its appointed place upon the endless pewter plane and waited for the wind. As the ship moved upon this strange sea, the birds became frightened by its approach and flapped their short strong wings vainly. Around each bird then ripples arose widening evenly, slowly, until the graceful circles became tangent to one another. The *Iron City* lay upon a sheet of ancient silver chased with an inscrutable design.

ARRIVAL ON A HOLIDAY¹

By WILSON WRIGHT

(From *Harper's Magazine*)

I WAS being shown Texas. It was the Fourth of July, and a great many natives were looking at Texas too; and our fast morning drive of about two hundred miles had shown me more of the chances of sudden death than it had of Texas. There is an unrestrained hilarity about the Texan style of driving, and when you added to this the fact that apparently Texas was the place old cars came to when they died, you had a fine feeling of hazard in what you were doing.

You don't see much of Texas in two hundred miles. In fact, you hardly see more than a long straight band of good new concrete wide enough for your car and another car to pass, and slowly getting narrower, according to the laws of perspective. Those laws were never interfered with by any irregularities of the landscape in the part of Texas I was being shown. Sometimes, though, waves of heat closed the road long before its edges ended it naturally by meeting at infinity.

Narrow, unpaved roads often came abruptly into the main highway, sometimes out of an area covered with trees, sometimes from behind a collection of wood and stucco houses with a filling station and a roadside restaurant among them, sometimes simply out of flat space. You couldn't see what the country was like along these roads, but once or twice, when a car turned into the highway from one of them, you could tell from the appearance of the car what it probably was like. Those cars were always covered with dust, and the faces of the people in them were dusty too, and on the axles and under the mudguards there was always a caking of dried clay mud.

We went down one of these roads finally, because we were hunting a short cut to a place where we could get some lunch. We had to go slowly because of the bumps and the washed-out places with muddy water still in the bottom of them. Even if you were only a passenger, you couldn't take your eyes off the roadbed.

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It was unexpected when we came around a corner hidden by trees growing in a swamp, and found ourselves making the last in a line of four or five cars waiting to cross a little river by one of the ferries run by the Highway Department in that part of Texas. Apparently you always had to wait for some time at one of these ferries, because there was a store with a lunch counter in it just by the slip, and everybody who drove up simply left their cars standing in line, with the doors hanging open, and went into the store. They got a sandwich, or a piece of pie, and a bottle of soft drink, and then stood on the porch and quietly waited.

We shut off our motor and got out, and as we did, an old model-T Ford came into the line behind us. It had more dust and mud on it and flatter springs than any car I'd yet seen; and what was more, before the driver shut off his motor, you could hear what a bad state his engine was in. The gasket leaked, for one thing. The car couldn't possibly have done more than stumble along from wherever it had come. We went inside to get a coca-cola and some cigarettes, but we sat down at the counter because it was cooler inside than out, and besides, the porch was full, and all the people there were making remarks to each other, and we'd have had to fit ourselves into that if we went outside. There were three dogs too, out of the motors, and they scrambled back and forth among the people waiting, and panted.

The man who owned the place was an Italian-looking man, though from the way he talked — exactly like all the people on his porch — you wouldn't have thought of his being a foreigner. We couldn't get the kind of cigarettes we wanted. 'Folks right around here don't ask for that brand much,' he said, 'so I only keep the kind they mostly do ask for. Those that don't usually smoke this kind I keep seem anyhow willing to take them for once, so I don't bother to keep more than the one kind. Anyhow, it's all I've got.' We bought those and started to drink our coca-colas, and he went to the other side of the store to talk to some friends of his that stood there.

The screen door squeaked and then banged behind somebody, and a man said, in a general sort of way to everybody in the store, 'Is Bill anywheres about?'

Everybody seemed to agree it was the storekeeper's place to answer, because they stood and said nothing; so he said, 'Maybe

you mean Bill Russell?' Nobody said anything. 'Or maybe it's more likely Bill Harding you want?' he suggested hopefully.

I looked over my shoulder then at the man standing with his back against the screen door. He wasn't very big, and he had on an undershirt and a pair of blue dungarees and dirty sneakers. He didn't have a hat, and his hair, bleached and streaked with red dust, stood blown all ways from his head. I guessed he had come up in the Ford because the dust stuck with sweat around his eyes was the same color as the dust I'd noticed when the Ford drove in behind us.

'Well, I don't rightly know which of those two Bills I'm a-looking for, but the one I mean was in the army. He was in B-Company at that big camp place up-state. Maybe you-all can tell now?' he asked. His listeners shook their heads. The storekeeper thought that it couldn't be Bill Harding because he'd never heard of Bill Harding being in the army or at a camp.

'Bill works on a ferryboat roundabout here,' the stranger mentioned. 'He sent me a postcard saying he had a job on a ferry. I guess this is Hollis's Crossing?'

'Sure, this is Hollis's Crossing.'

'Well, then, the Bill I'm a-looking for works on the ferryboat here.'

'That's bound to be Bill Russell then.'

'Then that's all right,' said the man, wiping his forehead with his dusty arm and making fresh streaks. 'I'm sure glad to know his name's Bill Russell. He just put "Bill" on the card he sent me. I knowed, easy enough, it was the Bill I knowed in B-Company because of what he put about ferryboating being easier than the army. But I couldn't think of what he called himself, anyhow.'

'Bill Russell ain't around here today,' one of the storekeeper's friends let out. 'I seen him go off up the road on the other side of the creek first thing this morning.'

This didn't matter to the man. He opened the screen door, and after it had banged behind him we heard him shouting to the people in his car, 'Hey! Hey! Jenny! Bring the kids. This is the right place.' Then he came in again and climbed onto a stool at the counter.

'I'm sure glad to find this Bill,' he told us, knowing we were interested and friendly, 'because I came near to eight hundred miles to get here.'

I was interested to hear this piece of information. I should have said it was impossible. But no one else seemed astonished. The storekeeper came around to the lunch-counter side of his store, and his friends began to drift across. There was quite a crowd interested in the man.

'Eight hundred miles?' the storekeeper calmly repeated. 'That'd be pretty far across the State.'

'Well, it ain't quite out of the State,' the dusty man seriously explained, 'but it's pretty far out in the sand.'

The screen door opened and shut and let in a woman and two children. She was young and covered with dust, like her husband, and dressed in one of his khaki shirts and a pair of breeches made of cheap whipcord. She had on cotton golf-stockings and high-heeled pumps. They made her walk a little shakily, or perhaps that was the result of sitting so long holding the baby in her arms and with the little boy crowded in between her and her husband on the front seat. The baby was in one of those five-and-ten bathing suits, and the boy had on some blue overalls. He was sunburnt red and brown where they didn't cover him.

He saw his father at the counter as soon as he got inside. 'Want a cone,' he said. His mother followed him and took the stool beside her husband. 'I could do with a coca-cola,' she said.

'Bill's name is Bill Russell,' he told her.

'Well, I'm sure glad to hear what his name is,' she answered in a pleased way.

'He ain't here now. I mean right at this minute.'

'Well, if this is where he's at, we can wait till he comes back.'

This seemed to settle the immediate future for them, so they started to drink their coca-colas. But the notion amused the storekeeper's friends. They laughed, and then one of them said, 'I sure hope you people got lots of time to spare. This here's a holiday today, you know, and usually when Bill takes a day off like today, he goes and gets himself good and drunk. He might stay drunk two and three days maybe.'

'Time ain't no concern o' mine,' said the man cheerfully. 'Bill's a-getting me a job, so I'm happy to wait.'

This news interested his listeners even more than his simple narrative, because they thought they knew of every job in the neighborhood. 'Oh,' said the storekeeper, 'you're a-coming to work?'

'Sure thing. I want some work to do. Maybe you don't know I dropped a job to come here. I wouldn't like to try to go no further. I got tired o' my other job, but that don't mean I'm tired o' work in general. But aside from that I'll be right pleased to see Bill again. I've been a-thinking of that ever since I got his card.'

His wife broke in. She had emptied her coca-cola bottle. 'That tasted good,' she first said, and then she did some of the explaining. 'He had a job in the garage at Holy City. That's where we come from. It's a thousand miles. He changed and fixed flats, and that kept him pretty busy out there in the sand. But it was kind o' tough out there because the boss started picking on him. And it was pretty tough too, getting milk for the kid, like a magazine I read in the barber shop said you ought to do. So when he read me this card from Bill, and told me about who Bill was, I said he'd never find a better time to pull out than right now, when maybe Bill could help him.' She told all of this in a matter-of-fact way.

Her husband completed the story. 'You sure get tired of being in a place like Holy City. Why, they don't change the movies but once a week there.'

'There ain't no movie house at all here,' said the storekeeper.

'No, but it ain't so far to town,' the woman argued.

All the listeners nodded sympathetically.

'Maybe we'd better eat here now,' the woman suggested. So they had hot-dogs and pie and more coca-cola, and then the boy had a hot-dog and some milk. The baby didn't seem to be worrying about food. The storekeeper looked at the woman inquiringly, but she said, 'No, I go on a-feeding her myself.'

While they ate, the general talk went on. It was mostly questions and answers, all very direct and searchingly personal. No one felt any restraint. The little boy had an ice cream cone after he had finished his solid food.

'I don't guess there's any use a-going to hunt Bill out today?' the man asked, after borrowing a cigarette from me.

'Sure to be no use,' somebody replied.

'Bill ain't changed much,' said the man, dropping the idea of a search. 'I remember from camp, it was always best to wait where you were at for him.'

A man put his head in the door and spoke indirectly to everybody: 'Are you folks going on this boat? All the cars in front of you went.'

Bill Russell's friend answered for us all: 'You-all pull out around me, if you please. We aim to sit here a bit.'

We, however, got up and left. But by the time we got down to our cars a good many of the string had got in in front of us. The ferry had blown its whistle and started to move away too. So we went back and leaned on the candy counter, no longer in the center of the talk.

They had got on well with their questions while we were outside, because it seemed to me that the important point was finally reached just after we came in again; and it certainly hadn't been in sight when we went out. 'There ain't no more jobs on that ferryboat, friend,' the storekeeper was saying. 'Those are the best-liked jobs around here, and people keep to them. Bill Russell's had his near a year.'

The man seemed a little disappointed. 'Well, I sure thought when Bill said he was on a ferryboat that he'd find me a place on that boat too. I've sure been a-thinking that.'

'I don't rightly see how that'd be likely,' a man said reflectively. He was on the stool I had vacated. 'It takes only two men to run that boat. The State hires four and they work eight-hour shifts. And they don't run it at all at night. There's Bill and Ebee and Pike and . . .' He thought for a moment and then spoke along the counter, past the stranger who was listening dispassionately, to an acquaintance beyond: 'Sam, I'm clean out of my mind. What's that other fellow's name?'

Sam said, 'His name's Heron, Jim Heron. He does the afternoon turn along with Ebee.'

'Sure, I recollect it now. Jim Heron.' Then he turned to the stranger and completed what he had started to say. 'I don't rightly see how Bill could do anything much. Maybe, as I see it, he promised more than he could do.'

'No, he didn't rightly promise nothing,' said the man comfortably. 'He wouldn't act like that. No, he just wrote he was a-working here; and when I heard that it came on me I'd like pretty much a-working where he was. So we pulled out and came. He didn't promise me nothing; I was just a-thinking maybe. Bill, in fact, don't know I'm a-coming. He'll be right surprised.'

Though he showed no sign that he was cast down, his wife said to him encouragingly: 'Sure, even if he don't have no job on that ferry-

boat, he'll be bound to know lots a people, since so many goes on the boat all the time.'

None of the natives of Hollis's Crossing seemed to find anything out of the way in this situation. The only comment came from someone on the edge of the group. He remarked, 'Bill don't usually feel too good after he's been having a holiday like this.' This was taken as a simple statement of fact, and, as such, it led to nothing. The family ate pie for a while. The baby woke up.

'I'd best go and feed her,' the mother said, unbuttoning the neck of her shirt as she slid from the stool. 'You-all 'll excuse me, I guess, if I go out to the car,' she politely added. They all said, 'Sure, Ma'am, it's what you feel most like.' She teetered through the screen door on her high heels. The ferry whistle blew coming in.

'You-all couldn't tell me whereabouts I might stop till Bill comes along?' the stranger asked, pushing away his plate. 'I ain't got a lot o' money left after coming so far, but I aim to rest here till I get a-working with Bill.'

The men around him honestly racked their brains. The storekeeper spoke up first. 'Maybe you could get into my shed with your car. There ain't no conveniences there, but maybe it'd do.'

The man laughed happily at this easy solution. 'We've slept in my old car before this. And you should've seen the way Bill and me lived at that camp.'

'Well, it's just around the end of the store. You can drive in there.'

'I guess,' said the man, suddenly thinking of it, 'we can get hot-dogs and cokes, and maybe even milk in here? I got money enough for that.'

'Sure thing,' said the storekeeper.

'I'll go and move her in, then,' said the man as he took some change from his dungaree pocket.

We got out of the door before him and into our car. I heard the Ford hiss through its leaky gasket behind us. He blew his horn, one of the old hand klaxons, happily. I hadn't heard one for years. Then we pulled ahead toward the slip. We had to wait our turn before we could run on the boat and so the model-T came up beside us on its way to the shed. The driver waved his hand. His wife was still feeding the baby. The little boy's face, smeared with ice cream, stuck up between them. A dog I hadn't noticed before sat on their

possessions in the back seat and yawned in a comfortable way. Then the Ford stalled. The man got out, twisting himself skillfully under the steering-gear. We hadn't moved yet, so he came over to us.

'Ain't it damn-all,' he said, 'a-stopping like that just in sight a home?'

One of the ferrymen shouted to us and we had to start. The man called to his wife: 'Hurry up with that kid's supper, Jenny. You and me'll have to push this thing in and get us settled.' The ferry blew its whistle, and I didn't hear what she said, but I suppose it was something cheerful and undisturbed.

ROOM IN THE WORLD^{*}

By LEANE ZUGSMITH

(From *Story*)

WHEN she heard Ab's footsteps approaching the door, she knew, without having to see or to hear him, that it had been the same as yesterday and all the days before, since he had been fired from the job he had held as watchman for the office building. He couldn't do anything but talk about it all night long, and every day he went back trying to get to someone higher up who would tell the new superintendent 'Ab's been with us nine years, there ain't no reason to let him go.' If she was him, Pauline thought, she'd give it up and if, like he said, there wasn't no job for him no place, she'd go on Relief. With a five-months-old baby and a three-year-old boy growing so fast that the Lord only knew how she was going to make this suit of his any bigger, and a girl of eight, already in the second grade, she'd give it up. But Ab was bull-headed, always had been, and maybe he'd get back, like he said.

As Ab came in, she hastened to close the door leading off the kitchen into the room where Jappy was taking his nap. Even when Ab raised his voice, it wouldn't wake the baby in the market basket near the stove. She was a dandy sleeper, better than Jappy, much better than Frances ever had been.

She thrust the needle into the material, waiting to see if Ab was going to speak first. If he kept on staring at her, it was up to her and it meant he was good and sore. After a while, she knew it was up to her.

'Either the clock's fast,' she said in the casual, conversational tone she had lately learned to use, 'or Frances must of been kept in.' Gloomily he stared at her.

'She done her homework, I know.' Pauline turned Jappy's drawers inside out and studied the problem of enlarging them.

'I tried every God-damned one of them,' he said between his teeth. 'I seen all their chippy secretaries. They're all too God-

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damned busy to see me. I'm only working there *nine* years. Maybe that ain't long enough.'

'No one can say you ain't tried,' she said.

'Tried? I done everything but crawl along the corridors on my belly. It's "see the super. It's up to the super." Nuts!'

'Them real-estate people are over the super,' she said sympathetically and she thought: he won't give it up yet. No use telling him about the gas or how they wouldn't give her credit at the other grocery store she tried out.

'They won't even see me. You seen what they written me.'

'It was a sin the old super had to die,' she said.

'The new one will take me back,' he said ominously. 'I ain't saying how, but I'm gonta get back on the job.'

Hooding her anxious eyes as she watched him to read what was in his mind, she heard Frances at the door. She hurried to open it, her mind still on her husband's words. The kid was all excited about something, the way she got sometimes, dancing around the room. She sure was high-strung; good thing the baby didn't seem to take after her. Pauline was afraid she'd begin to bother her pa, but he didn't seem to take notice, banging his hand down on the kitchen table, crying out:

'I ain't going back crawling to them, neither, to get it!'

She cast a swift look at the baby to see if she had been disturbed by the noise. 'Maybe —' Pauline began.

'Maybe, nothing! I'll be back on the job, wait and see.'

Frances kept tugging at her arm. 'Ma, I been telling you.'

Ab glared at his daughter.

'We're talking now, Pa and me,' Pauline said quickly.

'Only, Ma, let me tell about the new little girl, she come today. She's got curls just like Shirley Temple.' Frances's voice went up high.

'Shut up!' said Ab.

'The new little girl, she looks just like Shirley Temple.'

'Play in the other room.' Her mother pinched her cheek. 'Jappy's asleep in yours and his.'

'No, I don't wanta. I wanta tell you about the new little girl, Ma, she's got red paint on her fingernails. Can't I have —'

Her mother interrupted her. 'You're getting your Pa worked up, not minding.' She reached for a tin pail. 'Go on down and get me

five cents' worth of milk, hear me. Tell him your Ma said she'd stop in and pay up tomorrow.'

Ab breathed heavily after the little girl had left the room. Without looking up from her sewing, his wife said calmly: 'She's only eight.' And she thought: in a while, when we can't get no credit no place, there won't be that much spirit in any of them.

'I'm trying to think out what to do, and she comes in babbling till she gets me all mixed up.'

'Try to think what you was thinking before.'

'What do you think I'm trying to do?'

The tick of the clock sounded loud now. The baby's occasional soft snores could be heard. Pauline kept her head bent over her sewing until Ab spoke up.

'You know how they do when a lot of them go out on strike,' he said.

'Well?'

'Like I read once in a newspaper, see, a fellow and his whole family, they go out with signs, asking for his job back.'

Her face became thoughtful. 'Like them pickets is what you mean?'

'You got me.'

She ceased to sew. 'I couldn't leave Frances take care of the baby.'

'No. She'd let it smother or something.' He looked down at his hands for a while. Presently he said: 'I could take the two kids, see, all of us wearing signs asking for my job back.'

'I could make the signs O. K., if we had some kind of stiff paper,' she said. 'You wouldn't walk Jappy too long, would you, Ab? He don't stand much walking.'

Ab stood up, his face lighted. 'That would get them, all right, you bet! Maybe them newspaper guys will come around and take our pictures.' He pulled a pencil from his vest pocket and smoothed the wrinkles from a brown paper bag.

'Maybe down at the corner, they'd give you some stiff paper,' said Pauline.

He wet the pencil, leaning over the kitchen table, too elated to sit down. 'Now, we'll say —' He wet the pencil once more. 'What'll we say?'

'If the sign's for the kids it had oughta say something about "my Pa" and so on.'

'You got brains, Pauline,' he said. "'Please get my Pa back his job.' How's that?'

'O. K.'

'We'll make Jappy's and Frances's alike. Now mine.' He wet the pencil. 'What would you say?'

"'Get me back my job at the Stark Building,' how about that?'

'No,' he said. He started to print letters. 'How's this? "Fired for no reason after nine years being watchman at the Stark Building."'

'That's O. K.,' she said.

'O. K.? It's the nuts!' he cried out gleefully. 'Wait till I see the faces of them birds who think they ain't gonta take me back!'

It was getting past the baby's feeding time; Pauline thanked her stars that she was so good she wouldn't start bawling right off. She couldn't pick her up with Jappy goose-stepping around, already dressed to go out, the sign flapping as he thrust each leg straight out before him, Frances trying to see how the sign looked on her before the little mirror over the dresser, and Ab yelling: 'Let's go to town. Come on, you kids.'

Jappy couldn't be held down. He kept singing: 'I'm a picket, I'm a picket, I'm a picket,' until they couldn't help laughing.

'Them signs are going to blow all around on them,' Pauline said.

'Don't worry about them signs,' Ab cried out. 'Come on, you kids.'

'I'm a picket,' shouted Jappy. In a fit of wildness, he dug his forefinger into the top of his cap and began whirling around.

'You'll get dizzy. Stop it!' his mother called out.

Frances ran in. 'I can't see what I look like, Ma,' she complained.

Jappy started going round too fast and fell down.

'You bent the sign,' his father said crossly, picking him up.

Jappy smiled when he saw that he didn't have to cry.

'It'll only take a minute.' Pauline threaded a needle and began to sew the bottom corners of the sign on to Jappy's little coat. 'I'll sew on yours, too,' she told Frances.

'Lift me up, Pa, in by the looking-glass, so's I can see,' Frances begged.

As Ab took her into the other room, Pauline said to her son with exasperation: 'Keep still, will you!'

'I'm gonta be a picket,' he screamed joyfully. 'I'm gonta go up to them dopes —'

'Where did you learn that?' She bit off the thread.

'I'm gonta be a dope, I'm gonta be a picket.'

Frances came back, saying sulkily: 'I can't read what it says in the looking-glass.'

'You know what it says. I told her.' Ab followed her.

'What's mine say?' cried Jappy.

'It says "Give my Pa back his job,"' said Frances, holding still while her mother sewed the bottom corners of her sign on to her jacket.

'Give my Pa back his job,' Jappy chanted, starting once more to goose-step.

Ab grabbed his hand. 'Come on. I ain't gonta wait another minute.'

Picking up the baby, Pauline followed them to the door. As soon as she had closed it, she heard sounds of bawling outside. It was Jappy, all right. She opened the door. Ab called angrily to her from the stairs. 'He wantsta take his Popeye doll along with him. He ain't gonta.'

Jappy's cries were louder now that he knew his mother was listening. 'Let him,' she said. 'It won't do no harm.' Might do good, she thought, them seeing a little kid with a doll. 'I'll get it.'

'Make it snappy,' Ab called back.

She found the wooden figure from which all the paint had streaked. Jappy was back at the door with Frances just behind. The little boy smirked. 'Popeye the Sailor's gonta be a picket,' he said.

'Hurry up!' Ab called out.

'Popeye wants a sign.' Jappy held the doll up to his mother. 'Make him a sign.' His chin was beginning to tremble.

She snatched a fragment of paper from the table, scribbled on it and attached it precariously to the doll. 'Hurry.' She gave both children little pushes and then stood with her ear to the crack of the door where she could hear them talking as they went toward the stairs.

'Popeye's sign says, "Give my Pa back his job,"' said Jappy.

'It don't say nothing,' said Frances. 'It's only scribble.'

'It do, too,' he said.

Then their voices became fainter. She wished she could see the street from their windows to watch them walking away. Hope Ab don't forget he shouldn't keep them out too long. The baby began to whimper, and she patted its back as she unbuttoned her blouse. It don't do no good for me to skimp on eating, she thought, or I'll only take it away from the baby.

When they came back, Ab couldn't talk of anything but the expression on the new super's face and how people had stopped them and they almost had their pictures taken. As Pauline ripped the stitches off Jappy's sign, she noticed that he was almost asleep on his feet. When she started to rip the stitches off Frances' sign, she saw that her skinny legs were trembling. She looked up into the little girl's miserable face. 'Why, what's the matter, honey?'

Before Frances could get out a word, she began to bawl. She bawled just like she did when she was a baby.

'What happened to her?' Pauline turned to Ab.

'I don't know.' He was beginning to be gloomy again.

Pauline put her arms around Frances. 'Tell Ma,' she said.

Her breath catching, the tears streaming down the monkey face she was making, Frances said: 'The new little girl seen me.'

'A lot of people seen you,' said Pauline. 'That don't make no difference.' She was trying to keep her voice steady.

Frances struggled out of her mother's reach. 'The new little girl seen me,' she got out between sobs and ran from the room.

'I try to get back my job,' said Ab heavily, 'and that's the thanks I get.'

Before she spoke, she looked around for Jappy and, finding him asleep on the floor, she said, trying to pick her words:

'She got a crush on some little girl at school she says looks like Shirley Temple.'

'That ain't gonta get my job back.' Ab bent his head over the table where his sign and Jappy's lay.

Both of them could hear, through the closed door, Frances's frenzy of weeping.

Pauline swallowed. 'Other people seeing her don't make no difference, on account of she's at the age, see what I mean?'

'No,' he said, but his lowered voice had in it a curious strain.

'She's highstrung, Ab. To some other kid it mightn't mean no-

thing, only with her it might set her back, you know how kids are.'

She waited for him to reply, watching him make marks on the back of his sign with his pencil. It was the truth, he might as well admit it. Other people didn't have to take out their kids with signs on them begging for their Pa's job. The weeping in the next room had subsided into long sighs and occasional hiccoughs.

Presently, without looking up, he said: 'I shouldn't oughta take her tomorrow.'

'Jappy likes it,' Pauline said hopefully.

He made more marks on the back of the sign. Still without looking up, he said: 'We could change the words tomorrow.' He pushed the lettering toward her, keeping his eyes averted.

The crooked printing said: 'Ain't there room in the world for us?' Now it's gonta bust out, she thought. Only you can't let it go, not with the kid bawling in the other room and him so down in the mouth. She swallowed the thing in her throat. And, searching for it, she found the tone she had lately learned to use.

'It don't seem like "ain't" is the right word there,' she said in a casual, conversational voice.

THE YEARBOOK OF THE AMERICAN SHORT
STORY

JANUARY 1 TO DECEMBER 31, 1936

ABBREVIATIONS

I. PERIODICALS

<i>A.L.</i>	American Literature.
<i>A.Merc.</i>	American Mercury.
<i>A.Sp.</i>	American Spectator.
<i>Ad.</i>	Adelphi (England).
<i>Am.</i>	American Magazine.
<i>Am.P.</i>	American Prefaces.
<i>Asia.</i>	Asia.
<i>Atl.</i>	Atlantic Monthly.
<i>B.C.J.</i>	Book Collectors' Journal.
<i>Book News</i>	Book News.
<i>Books</i>	Books (New York Herald-Tribune).
<i>C.For.</i>	Canadian Forum.
<i>C.G.</i>	Country Gentleman.
<i>C.H.J.</i>	Canadian Home Journal.
<i>Can.</i>	Canadian Magazine.
<i>Car.</i>	Caravel.
<i>Cath.W.</i>	Catholic World.
<i>Chic.Trib.</i>	Chicago Tribune (Syndicate Service).
<i>Col.</i>	Collier's Weekly.
<i>Colophon.</i>	Colophon.
<i>Colum.</i>	Columbia.
<i>Com.</i>	Commonweal.
<i>Cor.</i>	Coronet.
<i>Cos.</i>	Cosmopolitan.
<i>Del.</i>	Delineator.
<i>Eng.J.</i>	English Journal.
<i>Esq.</i>	Esquire.
<i>Fan.</i>	Fantasy.
<i>Fight.</i>	Fight.
<i>For.</i>	Forum.
<i>Frontier.</i>	Frontier and Midland.
<i>G.H. (N.Y.).</i>	Good Housekeeping (New York).
<i>H.A.</i>	Harvard Advocate.
<i>Hos.</i>	Hairenik.
<i>Harp.B. (N.Y.).</i>	Harper's Bazaar (New York).
<i>Harp.M.</i>	Harper's Magazine.
<i>Hin.</i>	Hinterland.
<i>Hor.</i>	Horizon.
<i>House.</i>	Household Magazine.
<i>Husk.</i>	Husk.
<i>I.L.</i>	International Literature.
<i>J.F.</i>	Jewish Forum.
<i>J.o'L.</i>	John o'London's Weekly (London).
<i>Kans.</i>	Kansas Magazine.
<i>L.H.J.</i>	Ladies' Home Journal.
<i>L.L.</i>	Life and Letters To-day (London).
<i>L.Merc.</i>	London Mercury.
<i>La.H.Q.</i>	Louisiana Historical Quarterly.
<i>Lit.A.</i>	Literary America.
<i>M.H.S.</i>	Missouri Historical Society Glimpses of the Past.
<i>M.L.N.</i>	Modern Language Notes.
<i>Mad.</i>	Mademoiselle.
<i>Man.</i>	Manuscript.

<i>Manu.</i>	Short Story Manuscripts of 1936.
<i>Mat.</i>	Material Gathered.
<i>McCall.</i>	McCall's Magazine.
<i>Mod. M.</i>	Modern Monthly.
<i>N. A. Rev.</i>	North American Review.
<i>N. D.</i>	New Directions.
<i>N. E. Q.</i>	New England Quarterly.
<i>N. M. Q.</i>	New Mexico Quarterly.
<i>N. Mass.</i>	New Masses.
<i>N. Rep.</i>	New Republic.
<i>N. S.</i>	New Stories (England).
<i>N. State.</i>	New Statesman (London).
<i>N. W.</i>	New Writers.
<i>N. Y.</i>	New Yorker.
<i>N. Y. Times.</i>	New York Times Book Review.
<i>N. Y. Times Mag.</i>	New York Times Magazine.
<i>Nat.</i>	Nation.
<i>Op.</i>	Opinion.
<i>Opp.</i>	Opportunity.
<i>P. M. L. A.</i>	Proceedings of the Modern Language Association of America.
<i>P. P.</i>	Purple Pen.
<i>Par.</i>	Parade.
<i>Part. R.</i>	Partisan Review.
<i>Pict. R.</i>	Pictorial Review.
<i>Pr. S.</i>	Prairie Schooner.
<i>Pub. W.</i>	Publishers' Weekly.
<i>Q. Q.</i>	Queen's Quarterly.
<i>R. N. L.</i>	Richmond News-Leader.
<i>Real.</i>	Real America.
<i>Red Bk.</i>	Red Book Magazine.
<i>S. A. Q.</i>	South Atlantic Quarterly.
<i>S. E. P.</i>	Saturday Evening Post.
<i>S. W.</i>	Southwest Review.
<i>Sat. R. (N. Y.)</i>	Saturday Review of Literature (New York).
<i>Scan.</i>	American-Scandinavian Review.
<i>Scho.</i>	Scholastic.
<i>Scr.</i>	Scribner's Magazine.
<i>Sig.</i>	Signatures.
<i>So. R.</i>	Southern Review.
<i>Spect.</i>	Spectator (London).
<i>Sto.</i>	Story.
<i>Sty.</i>	Stylus.
<i>T. T.</i>	Time and Tide (London).
<i>T. W.</i>	This Week
<i>Tan.</i>	Tanager.
<i>Tex. St.</i>	University of Texas Studies in English.
<i>Transit.</i>	Transition.
<i>U. R.</i>	University Review.
<i>Va.</i>	Virginia Quarterly Review.
<i>Ver.</i>	Vernier.
<i>W. H. C.</i>	Woman's Home Companion.
<i>Wauk.</i>	Waukon Republican Standard.
<i>Yale.</i>	Yale Review.
<i>Year.</i>	Yearbook of Stanford Writing.

II. BOOKS

<i>Alfau.</i>	Alfau. Locos.
<i>Beachcroft B.</i>	Beachcroft. You Must Break Out Sometimes. (English edition.)
<i>Bell B.</i>	Bell. Lucky Dip. (English edition.)
<i>Benson D.</i>	Benson. People Are Fascinating.

ABBREVIATIONS

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<i>Benson E.</i>	Benson. Collected Short Stories. (English edition.)
<i>Beresford C.</i>	Beresford. Blackthorn Winter. (English edition.)
<i>Boyle D.</i>	Boyle. The White Horses of Vienna.
<i>Burrell.</i>	Burrell and Cerf, <i>editors</i> . The Bedside Book of Famous American Stories.
<i>Caldwell E.</i>	Caldwell. Sacrilege of Alan Kent.
<i>Callaghan B.</i>	Callaghan. Now that April's Here.
<i>Caravan E.</i>	The New Caravan.
<i>Constanduros.</i>	Constanduros. Mrs. Buggins Calls. (English edition.)
<i>Corbett.</i>	Corbett. Mount Royal.
<i>Cunninghame Graham B.</i>	Cunninghame Graham. Mirages. (English edition.)
<i>Davies G.</i>	Davies. The Things Men Do. (English edition.)
<i>De La Mare J.</i>	De La Mare. The Wind Blows Over.
<i>Fagin B.</i>	Fagin, <i>editor</i> . America Through the Short Story.
<i>Flandrau B.</i>	Flandrau. Under the Sun.
<i>Gellhorn.</i>	Gellhorn. The Trouble I've Seen.
<i>Grayson C.</i>	Grayson, <i>editor</i> . Stories for Men.
<i>Haardt.</i>	Haardt. Southern Album.
<i>Hackney.</i>	Hackney, <i>editor</i> . No Want of Meat, Sir! (English edition.)
<i>Hadfield.</i>	Hadfield, <i>editor</i> . Modern Stories of the Open Air. (English edition.)
<i>Hale.</i>	Hale. The Earliest Dreams.
<i>Halward.</i>	Halward. To Tea on Sunday. (English edition.)
<i>Hansen D.</i>	Hansen, <i>editor</i> . O. Henry Memorial Award Prize Stories of 1936
<i>Hecht B.</i>	Hecht. Actor's Blood.
<i>Horgan.</i>	Horgan. The Return of the Weed.
<i>Hull.</i>	Hull. Uncommon People.
<i>Humour B.</i>	The Second Century of Humour. (English edition.)
<i>Hungaria.</i>	Wolfe, <i>editor</i> . Hungaria. (English edition.)
<i>Jones.</i>	Jones. China Boy.
<i>Lagerkvist B.</i>	Lagerkvist. Guest of Reality. (English edition.)
<i>Lehmann.</i>	Lehmann, <i>editor</i> . New Writing. (English edition.)
<i>Lehmann B.</i>	Lehmann, <i>editor</i> . New Writing 2. (English edition.)
<i>Machen C.</i>	Machen. The Cosy Room. (English edition.)
<i>Machen D.</i>	Machen. The Children of the Pool. (English edition.)
<i>Mamet.</i>	Mamet. Mr. Justice.
<i>Mann F.</i>	Mann. Stories of Three Decades. (English edition.)
<i>Mather.</i>	Mather. A Chaste Polygamy. (English edition.)
<i>Maugham G.</i>	Maugham. Cosmopolitans.
<i>Missing.</i>	Missing from Their Homes. (English edition.)
<i>Mitchison E.</i>	Mitchison. The Fourth Pig. (English edition.)
<i>Mekler.</i>	Mekler. Miracle Men.
<i>Modern B.</i>	More Modern Short Stories. (English edition.)
<i>Morang C.</i>	Morang. Funeral in Winter.
<i>Mott.</i>	Mott, <i>editor</i> . Good Stories.
<i>O'Brien OQ.</i>	O'Brien, <i>editor</i> . The Best Short Stories: 1936.
<i>O'Brien RR.</i>	O'Brien, <i>editor</i> . The Best British Short Stories: 1936.
<i>O'Connor B.</i>	O'Connor. Bones of Contention.
<i>O'Reilly.</i>	O'Reilly. Pianos of Sympathy.
<i>Phillipotts J.</i>	Phillipotts. Once Upon a Time. (English edition.)
<i>Richter.</i>	Richter. Early Americana.
<i>Riding.</i>	Riding. Progress of Stories. (English edition.)
<i>Rood.</i>	Rood. This, My Brother.
<i>Sabatini B.</i>	Sabatini, <i>editor</i> . A Century of Historical Stories. (English edition.)
<i>Saroyan B.</i>	Saroyan. Inhale and Exhale.
<i>Saroyan C.</i>	Saroyan. Three Times Three.
<i>Segal.</i>	Segal. Many Enchantments. (English edition.)
<i>Smilansky.</i>	Smilansky. Palestine Caravan. (English edition.)
<i>Snelling.</i>	Snelling. Tales of the Northwest.

- Snow*.....Snow, *editor*. Living China. (English edition.)
Spender.....Spender. The Burning Cactus. (English edition.)
Stevens.....Stevens. The Tramp. (English edition.)
Stuart.....Stuart. Head o' W-Hollow.
Suckow D......Suckow. Carry-Over.
Swinstead-Smith.....Swinstead-Smith. The Marchesa. (English edition.)
Wallace.....Wallace. Going to the Sea. (English edition.)
Waugh.....Waugh. Mr. Loveday's Little Outing. (English edition.)
Wells H......Wells. All This Is Ended. (English edition.)
Wells J......Wells. The Croquet Player. (English edition.)
Wharton H......Wharton. The World Over.
Wheatley.....Wheatley, *editor*. A Century of Horror. (English edition.)
Williams K......Williams. Fellow-Mortals. (English edition.)

ADDRESSES OF MAGAZINES PUBLISHING SHORT STORIES

I. AMERICAN AND CANADIAN MAGAZINES

Adventure, 161 Sixth Avenue, New York City.
America, 329 West 108th Street, New York City.
American Magazine, 250 Park Avenue, New York City.
American Mercury, 570 Lexington Avenue, New York City.
American Prefaces, University Hall, Iowa City, Iowa.
American-Scandinavian Review, 116 East 64th Street, New York City.
American Spectator, 132 West 31st Street, New York City.
Argonaut, 544 Market Street, San Francisco, Cal.
Argosy, 280 Broadway, New York City.
Asia, 40 East 49th Street, New York City.
Atlantic Monthly, 8 Arlington Street, Boston, Mass.
Bozart-Westminster, Oglethorpe University, Georgia.
Canadian Forum, 28 Wellington Street, Toronto, Ont., Canada.
Canadian Home Journal, Richmond and Sheppard Streets, Toronto 2, Ont., Canada.
Canadian Magazine, 345 Adelaide Street West, Toronto, Ont., Canada.
Catholic World, 401 West 59th Street, New York City.
Chatelaine, 143 University Avenue, Toronto, Ont., Canada.
Chicago Tribune (Syndicate Service), 220 East 42nd Street, New York City.
Collier's Weekly, 250 Park Avenue, New York City.
Columbia, New Haven, Conn.
Commonweal, 386 Fourth Avenue, New York City.
Coronet, 919 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Ill.
Cosmopolitan, 57th Street and Eighth Avenue, New York City.
Country Gentleman, Independence Square, Philadelphia, Pa.
Delineator, 161 Sixth Avenue, New York City.
Elks Magazine, 50 East 42nd Street, New York City.
Esquire, 919 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Ill.
Fantasy, 950 Heberton Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Fiction Parade, 220 East 42nd Street, New York City.
Fight, Room 701, 268 Fourth Avenue, New York City.
Forum, 441 Lexington Avenue, New York City.
Frontier and Midland, University of Montana, Missoula, Mont.
Good Housekeeping, 57th Street and Eighth Avenue, New York City.
Harper's Bazaar, 572 Madison Avenue, New York City.
Harper's Magazine, 49 East 33rd Street, New York City.
Hinterland, 624 Third Avenue, S.E., Des Moines, Iowa.
Holland's Magazine, Dallas, Texas.
Horizon, 2802 Brighton 8th Street, Brooklyn, N.Y.
Household Magazine, Topeka, Kansas.
Husk, Cornell College, Mount Vernon, Iowa.
Kansas Magazine, Kansas State College, Kansas.
Ladies' Home Journal, Independence Square, Philadelphia, Pa.
Liberty, 1926 Broadway, New York City.
Literary America, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York City.
McCall's Magazine, 230 Park Avenue, New York City.
Maclean's Magazine, 481 University Avenue, Toronto, Ont., Canada.
Mademoiselle, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York City.
Manuscript, 17 West Washington Street, Athens, Ohio.

Midwest, 650 Gateway Building, Minneapolis, Minn.
 National Home Monthly, Bannatyne and Dagmar, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
 New Directions, Norfolk, Conn.
 New Masses, 31 East 27th Street, New York City.
 New Mexico Quarterly, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, N.M.
 New Republic, 40 East 49th Street, New York City.
 New Writers, 8200 Hamilton Boulevard, Detroit, Mich.
 New Yorker, 25 West 43rd Street, New York City.
 North American Review, 587 Fifth Avenue, New York City.
 Opinion, 122 East 42nd Street, New York City.
 Opportunity, 1133 Broadway, New York City.
 Parade, Architects Building, Philadelphia, Pa.
 Partisan Review, 430 Sixth Avenue, New York City.
 Pictorial Review, 57th Street and Eighth Avenue, New York City.
 Prairie Schooner, Box 1232, Station 'A', Lincoln, Nebraska.
 Queen's Quarterly, Queen's University, Kingston, Ont., Canada.
 Redbook Magazine, 230 Park Avenue, New York City.
 Saturday Evening Post, Independence Square, Philadelphia, Pa.
 Scholastic, 250 East 43rd Street, New York City.
 Scribner's Magazine, 597 Fifth Avenue, New York City.
 Short Stories, Doubleday, Doran & Co., Garden City, L.I., N.Y.
 Signatures, 3153 Union Guardian Building, Detroit, Mich.
 Southern Review, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, La.
 Southwest Review, Dallas, Texas.
 Story, 432 Fourth Avenue, New York City.
 Tanager, P.O. Box 66, Grinnell, Iowa.
 This Week, 420 Lexington Avenue, New York City.
 Toronto Star Weekly, Toronto, Ont., Canada.
 Vernier, 64 Stanley Street, Dumont, N.J.
 Virginia Quarterly Review, 8 West Lawn, University, Va.
 West, 220 West 42nd Street, New York City.
 Woman's Home Companion, 250 Park Avenue, New York City.
 Woman's World, 461 Eighth Avenue, New York City.
 Yale Review, P.O. Box 1729, New Haven, Conn.

II. BRITISH, IRISH, AND COLONIAL MAGAZINES

Adelphi, The Adelphi Centre, Langham, near Colchester.
 Argosy, Tallis House, Tallis Street, London, E.C. 4.
 Blackwood's Magazine, 45 George Street, Edinburgh, Scotland.
 Blue Peter, 12 St. Mary Axe, London, E.C. 3.
 Britannia and Eve, 346 Strand, London, W.C. 2.
 Bulletin, 214 George Street North, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.
 Bystander, 346 Strand, London, W.C. 2.
 Chambers's Journal, 11 Thistle Street, Edinburgh, Scotland.
 Cornhill Magazine, 50 Albemarle Street, London, W. 1.
 Criterion, 24 Russell Square, London, W.C. 1.
 Daily Express, Fleet Street, London, E.C. 4.
 Daily Herald, 12 Wilson Street, Long Acre, London, W.C. 2.
 Daily Mail, Northcliffe House, London, E.C. 4.
 Dublin Magazine, 2 Crow Street, Dublin, Irish Free State.
 English Review, 6 Great New Street, London, E.C. 4.
 Evening Standard, 46 Shoe Lane, London, E.C. 4.
 Fortnightly Review, 8 More's Passage, 51 Carey Street, London, W.C. 2.
 G.K.'s Weekly, 2 Little Essex Street, Strand, London, W.C. 2.
 Good Housekeeping, 28-30 Grosvenor Gardens, London, S.W. 1.
 Grand Magazine, 8-11 Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C. 2.
 Happy Magazine, 8-11 Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C. 2.
 Harper's Bazaar, 9 Stratton Street, Piccadilly, London, W. 1.
 Illustrated London News, 346 Strand, London, W.C. 2.

ADDRESSES OF MAGAZINES

John o'London's Weekly, 8-11 Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C. 2.
 Lady, 39 Bedford Street, Strand, London, W.C. 2.
 Left Review, 2 Parton Street, Red Lion Square, London, W.C. 1.
 Life and Letters To-day, 26 Maiden Lane, London, W.C. 2.
 Listener, Broadcasting House, Portland Place, London, W. 1.
 London Mercury, 10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C. 1.
 Manchester Guardian, 3 Cross Street, Manchester.
 Nash's Pall Mall Magazine, 28-30 Grosvenor Gardens, London, S.W. 1.
 New English Weekly, 7 and 8 Rolls Passage, Chancery Lane, London, E.C. 4.
 New Statesman and Nation, 10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C. 1.
 News-Chronicle, 19-22 Bouverie Street, London, E.C. 4.
 Novel Magazine, 18 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London, W.C. 2.
 Outlook, 59 Elmbank Street, Glasgow, C. 2.
 Outspan, P.O. Box 245, Bloemfontein, Orange Free State, S. Africa.
 Pearson's Magazine, 18 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London, W.C. 2.
 Queen, Hatfield House, Stanford Street, London, S.E. 1.
 Quiver, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.
 Red Magazine, Tallis House, Tallis Street, London, E.C. 4.
 Review of Reviews, 38 Bedford Street, Strand, London, W.C. 2.
 Sketch, 346 Strand, London, W.C. 2.
 Spectator, 99 Gower Street, London, W.C. 1.
 Sphere, 346 Strand, London, W.C. 2.
 Story-Teller, Tallis House, Tallis Street, London, E.C. 4.
 Strand Magazine, 8-11 Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C. 2.
 Sydney Mail, 38 Hunter Street, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.
 Tatler, 346 Strand, London, W.C. 2.
 Time and Tide, 32 Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C. 1.
 Truth, 10 Carteret Street, Queen Anne's Gate, London, S.W. 1.
 20-Story Magazine, 93 Long Acre, London, W.C. 2.
 Violet Magazine, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.
 Windsor Magazine, Warwick House, Salisbury Square, London, E.C. 4.
 Woman's Journal, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.
 Woman's Magazine, 4 Bouverie Street, London, E.C. 4.

ROLL OF HONOR

1936

NOTE: This list excludes reprints

I. AMERICAN AND CANADIAN AUTHORS

- | | |
|---|---|
| ANDERSON, SHERWOOD.
Nice girl. | DERLETH, AUGUST W.
Old Huckleberry. |
| BEARNSON, MARGARET SHERROD.
Ander Oklus an' de Lion. | DIGGES, JEREMIAH.
Arbutus Collar. |
| BENEDICT, LIBBY.
Decision. | DINNEEN, JOSEPH F.
Black Rose Bouquet. |
| BERTON, SHERLEY.
Ben Haskel. | FAULKNER, WILLIAM.
Brooch. |
| BESSIE, ALVAH C.
Personal Issue. | Fool about a Horse. |
| BOONE, JACK.
It Sure Whips Me. | Unvanquished. |
| BOYLE, KAY.
Career. | Vendée. |
| Friend of the Family. | FENSTAD, TRONDY.
Man-Fish of North Creek. |
| How Bridie's Girl Was Won. | FIELD, S. S.
Goodbye to Cap'm John. |
| Lydia and the Ring-doves. | Here Lies One. |
| Winter in Italy. | FOLEY, MARTHA.
Glory, Glory, Hallelujah! |
| Your Body is a Jewel Box. | GODCHAUX, ELMA.
Chains. |
| BRENNAN, LOUIS.
Kid. | What I'm Goin' to Tell Jesus? |
| BUCKNER, ROBERT.
Man Who Won the War. | GORDON, CAROLINE, and BUCKINGHAM,
NASH.
B from Bull's Foot. |
| BURLINGAME, ROGER.
Hottest Battle. | HALE, NANCY.
Artist, as an Old Man. |
| Last Equation. | Blue Muslin Sepulcher. |
| BURNET, WANDA.
Ten. | Mariana. |
| CALDWELL, ERSKINE.
Small Day. | Order. |
| CALLAGHAN, MORLEY.
Enemy of the People. | Possession. |
| Fiddler on Twenty-Third Street. | HALPER, ALBERT.
Poet. |
| In the Big Town. | HARDMAN, F. A.
Fighters. |
| It Must Be Different. | HEMINGWAY, ERNEST.
Short Happy Life of Francis Ma- |
| Their Mother's Purse. | comber. |
| Voyage Out. | Snows of Kilimanjaro. |
| CHRISTOWE, STOYAN.
Daughter of Demeter. | HERBST, JOSEPHINE.
Golden Harvest. |
| CLARKE, STEPHEN.
Father and Son — Two Lives. | HETE, EDWARD HARRIS.
Homecoming. |
| COOKE, CHARLES.
Enter Daisy; To Her, Alexandra. | HOFFMAN, ELEANOR.
Our Dear Little American. |
| COREY, GEORGE H.
Speed King. | HORGAN, PAUL.
Journey of Hope. |
| CRANE, STEPHEN.
Killing His Bear. | Surgeon and the Nun. |

ROLL OF HONOR

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KNIGHT, ERIC.
 Marne.
 KOMROFF, MANUEL.
 Accident.
 Girl with the Flaxen Hair.
 KRANTZ, DAVID E.
 Awakening and the Destination.
 KROLL, HENRY HARRISON.
 Second Wife.
 LEWIS, HOBART.
 Jess Willard Crouch.
 LIEFERANT, HENRY and SYLVIA.
 Magnificent Silence.
 LINN, R. H.
 Intrigue of Mr. S. Yamamoto.
 LULL, RODERICK.
 Third Degree.
 LYONS, ERNEST.
 Congo Prayer.
 McCLEARY, DOROTHY.
 Strictly to Ladies.
 MACDOUGALL, URSULA.
 Titty's Dead and Tatty Weeps.
 MCGINNIS, ALLEN.
 Let Nothing You Dismay.
 MARCH, WILLIAM.
 Maybe the Sun Will Shine.
 Sum in Addition.
 Upon the Dull Earth Dwelling.
 MAXWELL, WILLIAM.
 Remembrance of Martinique.
 MOREAU, LOUIS.
 Face.
 MORRIS, EDITA.
 Birth of an Old Lady.
 Blade of Grass.
 MORRIS, I. V.
 Marching Orders.
 MOTT, FRANK LUTHER.
 Footnote to Mortality.
 O'DONNELL, E. P.
 Canker.
 PASCALE, GERALDINE.
 Brother and Sister.
 PENDLETON, CONRAD.
 Old Work Mare.
 PLAUT, ELSIE.
 One into One is Two.
 PORTER, KATHERINE ANNE.
 Old Order.
 POST, MARY BRINKER.
 Dark Spring.
 ST. JOSEPH, ELLIS.
 Passenger to Bali.

SAROYAN, WILLIAM.
 Barber Whose Uncle Had His Head
 Bitten Off by a Circus Tiger.
 Cat.
 Crusader.
 Man in the Yellow Coupé.
 My Grandmother.
 Nurse, the Angel, the Daughter of the
 Gambler.
 SCHORER, MARK.
 Where Nothing Ever Happens.
 SHELBY, K. C.
 Picnic at Hamburg.
 STUART, JESSE.
 Fern.
 Hair.
 Men o' the Mountains.
 This is the Place.
 Toes.
 Uncle Fons Laughed.
 Uncle Joe's Boys.
 TERRELL, UPTON.
 Whistles Bring Things Back.
 THIELEN, BENEDICT.
 Forever Cherished.
 Lieutenant Pearson.
 Till Death Us Do Part.
 THOMPSON, LOVELL.
 'Iron City.'
 THOMPSON, THOMAS H.
 Good-bye, Old Man.
 VINES, HOWELL.
 Ginseng Gatherers.
 WEBB, JON EDGAR.
 Key in the Lock.
 WEIDMAN, JEROME.
 I Knew What I Was Doing.
 Portrait of a Gentleman.
 WESCOTT, GLENWAY.
 Rescuer.
 Sight of a Dead Body.
 WHEARTON, EDITH.
 Confession.
 WHEELER, POST.
 Diviner and the Poor Woman.
 WILLIAMS, WILLIAM CARLOS.
 Face of Stone.
 WILSON, WILLIAM E.
 Saturday Morning.
 WRIGHT, WILSON.
 Arrival on a Holiday.
 ZUGSMITH, LEANE.
 Amusing Story.
 Room in the World.

II. BRITISH AND IRISH AUTHORS

BATES, H. E.
 Jonah and Bruno.
 CHESTERTON, G. K.
 Vampire of the Village.
 DE LA MARE, WALTER.
 Physic.
 Strangers and Pilgrims.
 Trumpet.
 DUNSANY, LORD.
 Grecian Singer.
 House of Brass.
 Invention of Dr. Caber.
 Two Bottles of Relish.
 GREENE, GRAHAM.
 Chance for Mr. Lever.
 HOUSEHOLD, GEOFFREY.
 Kangaroo Loves Me.
 Salvation of Pisco Gabar.
 Technique.
 Water of Iturrigorri.

HUXLEY, ALDOUS.
 Morning in Basle.
 MANHOOD, H. A.
 Paradise Lost.
 MORLEY, JOHN ROYSTON.
 Womankind.
 O'CONNOR, FRANK.
 Orpheus and His Lute.
 O'FAOLÁIN, SEÁN.
 Lonely Lives.
 Tall Coorter.
 Two Ways of Life.
 THOMAS, DYLAN.
 Mouse and the Woman.
 WHITE, ERIC WALTER.
 Opatnostri!
 WILLIAMSON, HENRY.
 Crown of Life.

III. TRANSLATIONS

AKUTAKAWA, RYUNOSKE. (*Japanese.*)
 Spies.
 White Tasuki Detachment.
 ASCH, SHALOM. (*Yiddish.*)
 Fitch Maker.
 GLAESER, ERNST. (*German.*)
 Six Men in the Woods.
 LORENZ, KAROLIN. (*Austrian.*)
 Fritz.
 MANN, THOMAS. (*German.*)
 Godly Warrior.
 Joseph Meets Pharaoh.
 MAUROIS, ANDRÉ. (*French.*)
 Odd Dollar.

MOBERG, VILHELM. (*Swedish.*)
 Mind Reader of Tivoli.
 NAKOS, LILIK. (*Greek.*)
 Son.
 OTTWALT, ERNST. (*German.*)
 Last Things.
 PLATONOV, A. (*Russian.*)
 Third Son.
 SHIFTER, ADALBERT. (*Austrian.*)
 Christmas Eve.
 ZWEIG, ARNOLD. (*German.*)
 Old Man of the Sea.
 Sapper Schammes.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES

NOTE. These notices refer only to American authors whose work appears in the Roll of Honor in this series for the first time. Biographical notices of other authors included in this year's Roll of Honor may be found, with one or two exceptions in earlier volumes of the series.

ARGUILLA, MANUEL E. Born twenty-five years ago on a farm one hundred miles from Manila. Graduated from University of the Philippines, 1932. Has been proof-reader, subscription solicitor, short-story instructor, and freelance writer. Married. Teaches English in the University of Manila.

BEARNSON, MARGARET SHERROD. Born at Riverton, Alabama. Has lived in Idaho, California, Illinois, and Utah. Taught school in Idaho. Graduated from the University of Utah, 1930; M.A., 1931. Married, 1921. Has written a history of the Ku Klux Klan. Lives in Salt Lake City, Utah.

BERTON, SHIRLEY. Born in Denver, Colorado, 1905. Brought up in Boston. Has studied at Harvard, Columbia, and the New School. Author of 'A Barrel of Clams,' and 'Judy.' Lives at West Harpswell, Maine.

BOONE, JACK. Born and reared in the west Tennessee hills. Graduated from Vanderbilt University, 1930; M.A., 1931. Teaching fellow, English Department, Vanderbilt University, 1931-32. Now State Editor of the Federal Writers' Project for Tennessee. Lives in Nashville, Tennessee.

BUCKINGHAM, NASH. Born at Memphis, Tennessee, May 31, 1880. Educated at Memphis University School, Harvard University, and University of Tennessee Law School. Played football until 1920, professionally and otherwise. Sporting writer for great southern newspaper. Coached football, won an amateur southern boxing tourney, boxed incognito for several years, married, and settled down. Began writing for American outdoor publications. Engaged in jobbing and wholesale sporting goods business until 1925. Has had other business positions of an executive nature and once ran a cattle ranch. Author of 'De Shootin'est Gentman' and 'Mark Right.' Lives in Memphis, Tennessee.

BUCKNER, ROBERT HENRY. Born in Crewe, Virginia, May 28, 1906. Educated at University of Virginia and Edinburgh University. Has been a guide to the Louvre, foreign correspondent for the New York World, publisher, and advertising agent. Lives in Hollywood, California.

CLARKE, STEPHEN. Born in New York City, April 13, 1914. Educated at Hotchkiss and Princeton University. Lives in New York City.

COREY, GEORGE H. Born in 1903 of Irish-New England parentage. Educated in Chicago. Taught school in North China. Has been a reporter or press agent in China, Japan, South Africa, and South America. Now in the advertising business. Lives in New York City.

DIGGES, JEREMIAH. Born in 1903. Was a reporter for ten years. Lives in Provincetown, Mass.

DINNEEN, JOSEPH F. Born in Boston, March 23, 1897. Educated in Boston parochial and public high schools. Engaged in newspaper work in Boston since 1919. Author of 'In Sin and Splendor,' 'The Merry-go-Round of Murder,' and 'Ward Eight.' Is an unusually distinguished reporter. Married. Lives in Boston, Mass.

- KROLL, HENRY HARRISON.** Born near Hartford City, Indiana, 1888. Has spent most of his life in Tennessee. Author of 'The Mountain Singer,' 'Cabin in the Cotton,' and 'Three Brothers and Seven Daddies.' M.A., Peabody College. Married. Has been professor at Lincoln Memorial University, Iowa Wesleyan University, and Peabody College. Is now in the English Department, University of Tennessee Junior College, Martin, Tennessee.
- LEWIS, HOBART.** Born in New York City, 1910. Educated at the University of Pennsylvania and Princeton University. Married. Is now teaching in the Mercer Junior College, Princeton, New Jersey.
- LINN, R. H.** Born in Kenmare, North Dakota, February 2, 1911. Grew up in Fresno, California, in the midst of vineyards and prohibition. Educated at the College of the Pacific and the University of California. Has been to Japan and made a hobo trip in 1934 from Chicago to Los Angeles. Married. Is a high school teacher. Lives in Lindsay, California.
- LYONS, ERNEST FULTON.** Born in Laurel, Mississippi, March 4, 1905. Divides his time between writing and newspaper work. Advertising director of a newspaper. Lives in Stuart, Florida.
- MACDOUGALL, URSULA COOKE.** Born in 1901, New York City. Educated at Coopers-town High School, Vassar College, and the Sorbonne. Sister of Charles Cooke. Has been a school mistress and has had other occupations. Married to a Canadian civil engineer.
- MCGINNIS, ALLEN.** Born in McAlester, Oklahoma, 23 years ago. Educated at a Catholic school in Oklahoma. Is a stenographer. Unmarried. Lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma.
- MOREAU, LOUIS.** Born in Hessmer, Louisiana, Sept. 25, 1914. Educated in public schools and Louisiana State University. Lives in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
- PASCALE, GERALDINE.** Born in Lucania, Italy, thirty years ago. Emigrated to New York City. College graduate. Has taught school in New York City. Has taken several architectural tours to England, France, and Italy. Married. Lives in New York City.
- PENDLETON, CONRAD.** Born on Kicking Horse Flat near Long Creek, Oregon, May 2, 1905. Educated at Oregon State College and University of Oregon. Has been grocery clerk, timekeeper for one-horse roadcamps, hayhand, apple-picker, and flunkie. Hoboed around United States in 1923. Saw England and much of Europe in 1929. Teaches in Portland, Oregon.
- PLAUT, ELSIE.** Born in New York City. Educated at Barnard College and Columbia University. Lives in New York City.
- ST. JOSEPH, ELLIS.** Born in New York City, April 1, 1911. B.S.S., 1930. Has travelled widely in the United States, Central and South America, and the Pacific. Has written plays and is associated with Alfred Kreymsborg in the production of Federal Plays. Lives in New York City.
- THOMPSON, LOVELL.** Born in Nahant, Massachusetts, 1902. Graduated from Harvard University, 1925. Since then he has been associated with publishing houses in Boston. Lives in Beverly, Massachusetts.
- THOMPSON, THOMAS.** Born in Amarillo, Texas, January 27, 1909. Educated at New Mexico Military Institute, Southern Methodist University, and University of Southern California. Lives in Amarillo, Texas.
- WHEELER, POST.** Born at Owego, New York, August 6, 1869. Educated at Princeton University, University of Pennsylvania, and the Sorbonne. Married to Hallie Erminie Rives, 1906. Editor New York Press, 1896-1900. Has been in the Amer-

ican Diplomatic Service, since 1906. Served as Counsellor of Embassy and Chargé d'Affaires in Japan, Russia, Italy, Sweden, England, and Brazil. Has been American Minister to Paraguay and Albania. Specialist in international law. Author of many books in prose and verse, notably, 'Ho-Dau-Fo' in twelve volumes, 1936. Lives in Washington, D.C.

'WRIGHT, WILSON.' (WILLIAM REITZEL.) Born in Steelton, Pennsylvania. Educated at Haverford College and Oxford University. Has lectured at the University of Washington. Married. Now teaches at Haverford College. Has worked in a shipyard and held papers as a second-class electrical ship fitter. Author of 'Man Wants but Little' and 'The Pinnacle of Glory.' Editor of 'The Progress of a Ploughboy' by William Cobbett. Lives in Haverford, Pennsylvania.

THE BEST BOOKS OF SHORT STORIES

1936

I. AMERICAN AUTHORS

1. BENSON. *People are Fascinating*. Covici-Friede.
2. BOYLE. *White Horses of Vienna*. Harcourt, Brace.
3. CALLAGHAN. *Now that April's Here*. Random House.
4. HALE. *Earliest Dreams*. Scribner.
5. JONES. *China Boy*. Los Angeles: Primavera Press.
6. SAROYAN. *Inhale and Exhale*. Random House.
7. STUART. *Head o' W-Hollow*. Dutton.
8. WHARTON. *World Over*. Appleton-Century.

II. BRITISH AND IRISH AUTHORS

9. BLACKWOOD. *Shocks*. Dutton.
10. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM. *Rodeo*. Doubleday, Doran.
11. DE LA MARE. *The Wind Blows Over*. Macmillan.
12. MAUGHAM. *Cosmopolitans*. Doubleday, Doran.
13. O'CONNOR. *Bones of Contention*. Macmillan.
14. WAUGH. *Mr. Loveday's Little Outing*. Little, Brown.

III. TRANSLATIONS

15. CROSS AND SLOVER. *Ancient Irish Tales*. Holt.
16. MANN. *Stories of Three Decades*. Knopf.
17. TOLSTOY. *Tales of Army Life*. Oxford University Press.

VOLUMES OF SHORT STORIES

PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

1936

NOTE. An asterisk before a title indicates distinction.

I. AMERICAN AND CANADIAN AUTHORS

- ALDRICH, BESS STREETER. *Man Who Caught the Weather*. Appleton-Century.
ALFAU, FELIPE. *Locos*. Farrar and Rinehart.
BENSON, SALLY. **People Are Fascinating*. Covici-Friede.
BINNS, ARCHIE. *Backwater Voyage*. Reynal and Hitchcock.
BOYER, WARREN EDWARD. *Bandeet Maestro*. Hollywood, Cal.: Webbooks.
BOYLE, KAY. **White Horses of Vienna*. Harcourt, Brace.
BOYLE, KAY, LAURENCE VAIL, and NINA CONARAIN, *editors*. **365 Days*. Harcourt, Brace.
BRADLEY, MARY HASTINGS. *Five-Minute Girl*. Appleton-Century.
BRENT, LYNTON WRIGHT. *Gittin' in the Movies*. Hollywood, Cal.: Moderncraft Publishers.
BROWN, CHARLOTTE BEATE. *Old Brick House*. Boothbay Harbor, Maine: Boothbay Register Press.
BURRELL, ANGUS, and CERP, BENNETT A. *editors*. **Bedside Book of Famous American Stories*. Random House.
BYRD, SIGMAN. *Tall Grew the Pines*. Appleton-Century.
CALDWELL, ERSKINE. **Sacrilege of Alan Kent*. Portland, Maine: Falmouth Book House.
CALLAGHAN, MORLEY. **Now that April's Here*. Random House.
CLARKE, FRANCES ELIZABETH, *editor*. *Valiant Dogs*. Macmillan.
CORBETT, ELIZABETH. *Mount Royal*. Reynal and Hitchcock.
DAWSON, EMMA FRANCES. *Itinerant House*. San Francisco: Book Club of California.
ERSKINE, JOHN. *Young Love*. Bobbs-Merrill.
FAGIN, N. BRYLLION, *editor*. **America Through the Short Story*. Little, Brown.
FLANDRAU, GRACE. **Under the Sun*. Scribner.
FOOTE, JOHN TAINTOR. *Daughter of Delilah*. Appleton-Century. *Hell-Cat*. Appleton-Century.
GELLHORN, MARTHA. **Trouble I've Seen*. Morrow.
GILPATRICK, GUY. *Three Sheets in the Wind*. Dodd, Mead.
GOODWIN, FRANK. *Devil in Texas*. Dallas, Texas: Dealey and Lowe.
GOULD, DAVID, *editor*. *Outstanding Short Fiction, 1935*. Avon House.
GRAYSON, CHARLES, *editor*. *Stories for Men*. Little, Brown.
HAARDT, SARA. **Southern Album*. Doubleday, Doran.
HALE, NANCY. **Earliest Dreams*. Scribner.
HANSEN, HARRY, *editor*. *O. Henry Memorial Prize Stories of 1936*. Doubleday, Doran.
HECHT, BEN. *Actor's Blood*. Covici-Friede.
HORGAN, PAUL. **Return of the Weed*. Harper.
HOUSTON, KENNETH, *editor*. *American Scene*. Galleon Press.
HULL, HELEN. *Uncommon People*. Coward-McCann.
JONES, IDWAL. **China Boy*. Los Angeles: Primavera Press.
KLING, JOSEPH. *Count. Mt. Vernon, N.Y.*: Golden Eagle Press.
KREYMBORG, ALFRED, and others, *editors*. **New Caravan*. Norton.
KYNE, PETER B. *Soldiers, Sailors and Dogs*. Kinsey.
LOCKRIDGE, RICHARD. *Mr. and Mrs. North*. Stokes.
MAMET, LOUIS. **Mr. Justice*. Privately Printed.
MANNIX, DANIEL PRATT. *More Back-Yard Zoo*. Coward-McCann.

- MARQUIS, DON. *Sun Dial Time*. Doubleday, Doran.
 MASON, VAN WYCK. *Seven Seas Murders*. Doubleday, Doran.
 MEKLER, DAVID L. *Miracle Men*. Covici-Friede.
 MERCEIN, ELEANOR. *Mixed Company*. Harper.
 MORANG, ALFRED. **Funeral in Winter*. Portland, Maine: The Bradford Press.
 MORROW, W. C. *Over an Absinthe Bottle*. San Francisco: Book Club of California.
 MOTT, FRANK LUTHER, *editor*. **Good Stories*. Macmillan.
 O'BRIEN, EDWARD J., *editor*. *Best Short Stories: 1936*. Houghton Mifflin.
 O'REILLY, MONTAGU. *Pianos of Sympathy*. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions.
Post Stories of 1935. Little, Brown.
 PRINCE, HELEN ALBEE. *Grandma's Album Quilt*. Portland, Maine: Falmouth Book House.
 RATHBONE, CHARLES HORACE, *jr.* *It's the Climate*. Smith.
 REESE, LIZETTE WOODWORTH. *Worleys, Farrar and Rinehart*.
 RICE, ALICE HEGAN, and CALE YOUNG RICE. *Passionate Follies*. Appleton-Century.
 RICHTER, CONRAD. *Early Americana*. Knopf.
 ROBINSON, ROWLAND E. **Sam Lovel's Boy*. Rutland, Vt.: Tuttle.
 ROOD, JOHN. *This My Brother*. Chicago: Midwest Federation of Arts and Professions.
 SAROYAN, WILLIAM. **Inhale and Exhale*. Random House. **Three Times Three*. Los Angeles: Conference Press.
 SCHWARTZMAN, AARON S. *Ivan Moscow*. Christopher.
 SHERMAN, RICHARD. *To Mary, With Love*. Little, Brown.
 SNELLING, WILLIAM JOSEPH. **Tales of the Northwest*. University of Minnesota Press.
 STUART, JESSE. **Head o' W-Hollow*. Dutton.
 SUCKOW, RUTH. **Carry-Over*. Farrar and Rinehart.
 TERHUNE, ALBERT PAYSON. *Critter*. Harper.
 THOMAS, DOROTHY. **Home Place*. Knopf.
 TRAIN, ARTHUR. *Mr. Tutt's Case Book*. Scribner. *Mr. Tutt Takes the Stand*. Scribner.
 TURNER, HARRIET MACKEY. *Stories of Pioneer Days*. Christopher.
 WALKER, CORA. *Hidalgo*. Boston: Christopher.
 WEADOCK, JACK. *Dust of the Desert*. Appleton-Century.
 WEAR, GEORGE W. *Facts and Fancies*. Meador.
 WHARTON, EDITH. **World Over*. Appleton-Century.
 YOUNG, GLORIA. *Good Morning, Gloria*. Dallas, Texas: Story Book Press.

II. BRITISH AND IRISH AUTHORS

- ASQUITH, LADY CYNTHIA, *and others*. *Not Long for This World*. Harrisburg, Pa. Telegraph Press.
 BAILEY, H. C. *Clue for Mr. Fortune*. Doubleday, Doran.
 BEAUCLEERK, HELEN. **Mountain and the Tree*. Coward-McCann.
 BLACKWOOD, ALGERNON. **Shocks*. Dutton.
 BOLITTO, HECTOR. **House in Half Moon Street*. Appleton-Century.
 BURKE, THOMAS. *Night Pieces*. Appleton-Century.
 CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM, R. B. **Rodeo*. Doubleday, Doran.
 DE LA MARE, WALTER. **Wind Blows Over*. Macmillan.
 FIRBANK, RONALD. *Extravaganzas*. Coward-McCann.
 GIBOUARD, LADY BLANCHE. *World Is for the Young*. Macmillan.
 HAY, IAN. *Lucky Dog*. Little, Brown.
 KIPLING, RUDYARD. *All the Mowgli Stories*. Doubleday, Doran.
 KNOX, RONALD. *Barchester Pilgrimage*. Sheed and Ward.
 MAUGHAM, W. SOMERSET. **Cosmopolitans*. Doubleday, Doran.
 O'BRIEN, EDWARD J., *editor*. *Best British Short Stories: 1936*. Houghton Mifflin.
 O'CONNOR, FRANK. **Bones of Contention*. Macmillan.
 O'FAOLAIN, SEÁN. **Born Genius*. Detroit: Schuman's.
 SABATINI, RAFAEL. *Fortunes of Captain Blood*. Houghton Mifflin.
 SPENDER, STEPHEN. **Burning Cactus*. Random House.
 WAUGH, EVELYN. **Mr. Loveday's Little Outing*. Little, Brown.
 WODEHOUSE, F. G. *Young Men in Spats*. Doubleday, Doran.
 YATES, DORNFORD. *And Berry Came Too*. Putnam.

III. TRANSLATIONS

CROSS, TOM PEETE, and SLOVER, CLARK HARRIS, *editors.* (*Irish.*) *Ancient Irish Tales. Holt.

KOVNER, B. (*Yiddish.*) Laugh, Jew, Laugh. Bloch.

MANN, THOMAS. (*German.*) *Stories of Three Decades. Knopf.

MUSCHLER, R. C. (*German.*) One Unknown. Putnam.

TIMMERMANS, FELIX. (*Flemish.*) *Triptych of the Three Kings. McFarlane, Warde, McFarlane.

TOLSTOY, COUNT LYOF N. (*Russian.*) *Tales of Army Life. Oxford University Press.

ARTICLES ON THE SHORT STORY IN AMERICAN PERIODICALS

1936

A

Aldrich, Bess Streeter.

By Mabel L. Rossbach. N.Y. Times. Oct. 11. (34.)

Alfau, Felipe.

By G. C. N. Rep. Apr. 22. (86:323.)

By Jonathan Daniels. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Mar. 28. (10.)

By Mary McCarthy. Nat. Jun. 27. (142:848.)

By William Soskin. Books. Mar. 29. (6.)

By Edith H. Walton. N.Y. Times. Mar. 29. (7.)

Allen, James Lane.

By Henry Smith. A.L. May. (8:226.)

American Short Story.

By Charles Angoff. A. Sp. May. (57.)

By Newton Arvin. Part. R. Feb. (12.)

By W. R. B. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Jun. 13. (21.)

By Estelle N. Blumenthal. Books. Nov. 29. (10.)

By Ernest Boyd. A. Merc. Mar. (37:367.)

By Thomas Burke. A. Merc. Sept. (39:102.)

By V. L. O. Chittick. Frontier. Spring. (16:242.)

By Margaret Cheney Dawson. Books. Nov. 22. (13.)

By O. F. N. Rep. Aug. 19. (88:55.)

By Alfred Kazin. Books. May 10. (10.)

By Mary Jane Keeney. Frontier. Spring. (16:239.)

By Marianne Moore. Nat. Dec. 5. (143:672.)

By Gorham Munson. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Dec. 19. (15.)

By Ferner Nuhn. Books. May 31. (2.)

By William Phillips. N. Mass. Dec. 22. (23.)

By Ben Ray Redman. Books. Mar. 22. (12.)

By Karl Schriftgiesser. N. Rep. Aug. 12. (88:25.)

By William Soskin. Books. Nov. 15. (4.)

By George Stevens. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Aug. 15. (18.)

By Harold Strauss. N.Y. Times. Mar. 1. (6.)

By James Thurber. N. Rep. Mar. 25. (86:200.)

By José García Villa. Pr. S. Fall. (10:231.)

By Edith H. Walton. N.Y. Times. May 17. (7.) May 24. (7.) Nov. 29. (26.)

By Stanley Young. N.Y. Times. Aug. 16. (7.)

Anderson, Sherwood.

By Robert Morss Lovett. N. Rep. Nov. 25. (89:103.)

B

Barbusse, Henri.

By H. W. L. Dana. Fight. Aug. (7.)

By Sonja Hartwig. N. Mass. Sept. 8. (23.)

Beaucerk, Helen.

By M. F. N. Rep. Sept. 30. (88:236.)

By Louise Maunsell Field. N.Y. Times. Mar. 29. (2.)

By Lorine Pruette. Books. Mar. 29. (2.)

Benson, Sally.

By William Rose Benét. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Jul. 11. (7.)

By Obed Brooks. N. Mass. Jul. 28. (26.)

By Samuel Sillen. Nat. Aug. 1. (143:138.)

By William Soskin. Books. Jul. 5. (5.)

By Edith H. Walton. N.Y. Times. Jul. 5. (7.)

Bierce, Ambrose.

By Wilson Follett. N.Y. Times. Oct. 11. (2.)

By Tom Mahoney. Esq. Feb. (62.)

Blackwood, Algernon.

By Isaac Anderson. N.Y. Times. Oct. 4. (16.)

Anonymous. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Nov. 7. (12.)

By Will Cuppy. Books. Oct. 4. (14.)

Bolitho, Hector.

By Florence Haxton Britten. Books. Feb. 9. (12.)

By John Cournos. N.Y. Times. Feb. 9. (20.)

Borel, Pétrus.

By W. A. Reichart. M.L.N. Jun. (51:388.)

Boyle, Kay.

By Charles Angoff. A. Sp. May. (57.)

By Elizabeth Hart. Books. Feb. 9. (5.)

By N. L. Rothman. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Feb. 8. (6.)

By Frances Valensi. N. Rep. Feb. 26. (86:89.)

By Mark Van Doren. Nat. Mar. 4. (142:286.)

By Edith H. Walton. N.Y. Times. Feb. 9. (6.)

Bradley, Mary Hastings.

By Lorine Pruette. Books. Jul. 5. (10.)

By Samuel Sillen. Nat. Aug. 1. (143:138.)

By Edith H. Walton. N.Y. Times. Jun. 28. (16.)

British Short Story.

By W. R. B. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Oct. 31. (20.)

By Estelle H. Blumenthal. Books. Oct. 18. (20.)

By Margaret Cheney Dawson. Books. Nov. 22. (13.)

By H. T. M. N. Rep. Nov. 4. (89:28.)

By Edith H. Walton. N.Y. Times. May 3. (24.) Oct. 18. (12.)

Buck, Pearl S.

By Phyllis Bentley. Eng. J. Dec. '35. (24:791.)

Burke, Thomas.

By Percy Hutchison. N.Y. Times. Mar. 1. (2.)

By Fred T. Marsh. Books. Mar. 15. (12.)

Byrd, Sigman.

By Stanley Young. N.Y. Times. Jul. 5. (7.)

C

Cabell, James Branch.

By Edward M. Kingsbury. N.Y. Times. Feb. 16. (2.)

By Louis Kronenberger. Nat. Mar. 4. (142:286.)

By James Neugass. N. Mass. Mar. 31. (26.)

By Isabel Paterson. Books. Feb. 16. (4.)

By Burton Rascoe. Esq. Apr. (103.)

By Ben Ray Redman. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Feb. 29. (10.)

Cable, George W.

By John Olin Eidson. S.W. Winter. (21:211.)

Caldwell, Erskine.

By Charles Angoff. A. Sp. Jan. (11.)

By Marian Squire. Pub. W. Mar. 21. (129:1276.)

By Harold Strauss. N.Y. Times. Dec. 20. (7.)

Callaghan, Morley.

By William Rose Benét. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Sept. 19. (7.)

By Eleanor Clark. N. Rep. Oct. 21. (88:331.)

- By Eleanor Godfrey. C. For. Oct. (27.)
 By Josephine Herbst. N. Mass. Sept. 29. (24.)
 By Louis Kronenberger. Nat. Sept. 26. (143:370.)
 By Ferner Nuhn. Books. Sept. 13. (2.)
 By S. Y. N.Y. Times. Sept. 13. (6.)
 Chesterton, G. K.
 By Edward Angly. Books. Nov. 8. (1.)
 By Hilaire Belloc. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Jul. 4. (3.)
 By George Dangerfield. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Nov. 7. (7.)
 By C. J. Eustace. Com. Oct. 16. (24:580.)
 By Clifton Fadiman. N.Y. Nov. 7. (98.)
 By John B. Kennedy. N.Y. Times. Jun. 28. (2.)
 By Edward M. Kingsbury. N.Y. Times. Nov. 8. (3.)
 By Theodore Maynard. Cath. W. Aug. (143:522.)
 By T. Lawrason Riggs. Com. Dec. 11. (25:195.)
 By George N. Shuster. Com. Jul. 24. (24:319.)
 By Mark Van Doren. Nat. Nov. 28. (143:635.)
 Conrad, Joseph.
 By William McFee. A. Merc. Jan. (36:116.)
 By George Seiver. Tan. Dec. '35. (26.)
 Corbett, Elizabeth.
 By Edith H. Walton. N.Y. Times. Feb. 16. (7.)
 Corkery, Daniel.
 By Seán O'Faoláin. Com. Nov. 6. (25:35.)
 Crane, Stephen.
 Anonymous. N.Y. Nov. 7. (14.)
 By Ford Madox Ford. A. Merc. Jan. (37:36.)
 By Lyndon Pratt. Am. P. Summer. (1:164.)
 Cunningham, Graham, R. B.
 Anonymous. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Nov. 28. (11.)
 By Granville Hicks. N. Mass. Dec. 29. (22.)
 By Christopher Morley. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Apr. 25. (13.)
 By Edward Larocque Tinker. N.Y. Times. Nov. 29. (20.)

D

- De La Mare, Walter.
 By Ben Belitt. Nat. Oct. 24. (142:402.)
 By Stephen Vincent Benét. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Nov. 7. (11.)
 By Louise Townsend Nicholl. Books. Oct. 18. (6.)
 Dunne, Finley Peter.
 By Henry Seidel Canby. Sat. R. (N.Y.) May 9. (3.)
 By T. A. Daly. Sat. R. (N.Y.) May 9. (4.)

E

- Erskine, John.
 By George Conrad. Books. Sept. 6. (14.)
 By M. W. N.Y. Times. Aug. 30. (19.)

F

- Farrell, James T.
 By Eleanor Clark. N. Rep. Jan. 22. (85:317.)
 Firbank, Ronald.
 By Lloyd Morris. Books. Jan. 5. (11.)
 Flandrau, Grace.
 By Fred T. Marsh. N.Y. Times. Oct. 11. (4.)
 By Isabel Paterson. Books. Oct. 11. (4.)
 By Katharine Simonds. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Nov. 7. (25.)
 France, Anatole.
 By E. Preston Dargan. Va. Jan. (12:104.)

G

Galsworthy, John.

- By Samuel C. Chew. Books. May 10. (8.)
 By Francis X. Connolly. Com. Jun. 5. (24:163.)
 By George Dangerfield. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Apr. 18. (5.)
 By Ford Madox Ford. A. Merc. Apr. (37:448.)
 By Percy Hutchison. N.Y. Times. Apr. 12. (2.)
 By Leslie A. Marchand. Nat. May 13. (142:620.)
 By Walter L. Myers. Va. Jul. (12:448.)
 By Helen Neville. Nat. Jan. 1. (142:26.)
 By William Lyon Phelps. Yale. Summer. (25:814.)
 By Harvey Curtis Webster. N. Rep. Jul. 15. (87:302.)
 By Homer E. Woodbridge. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Jan. 4. (11.)

Gellhorn, Martha.

- By C. Hartley Grattan. N. Rep. Oct. 21. (88:328.)
 By Charles Talbot. N. Mass. Oct. 13. (23.)
 By Dorothy Thompson. Books. Sept. 27. (5.)
 By Mabel S. Ulrich. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Sept. 26. (7.)
 By Dorothy Van Doren. Nat. Oct. 31. (143:528.)
 By Edith H. Walton. N.Y. Times. Sept. 27. (3.)

Ghost Stories.

- By Basil Davenport. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Feb. 15. (3.)

Gilpatric, Guy.

- By Beatrice Sherman. N.Y. Times. Mar. 29. (31.)

Girouard, Lady Blanche.

- Anonymous. N.Y. Times. Jan. 19. (20.)
 By D. K. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Mar. 14. (25.)

Golding, Louis.

- By Joan Klein. Op. Apr. (14.)

Gorky, Maxim.

- By S. Breitburg. I.L. No. 10. (61.)
 By Many Gordon. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Aug. 1. (3.)
 By Alexander Kaun. Nat. Jul. 11. (143:48.)
 By Archibald Macleish. N. Mass. Aug. 4. (12.)
 By Romain Rolland. N. Mass. Jul. 14. (6.)

Grahame, Kenneth.

- By Eda Lou Walton. N.Y. Times. Mar. 29. (2.)

H

Haardt, Sara.

- By W. R. B. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Apr. 18. (21.)
 By Hamilton Basso. N. Rep. May 27. (87:79.)
 By Isabel Paterson. Books. Mar. 8. (9.)
 By Edith H. Walton. N.Y. Times. Mar. 8. (7.)

Hale, Nancy.

- Anonymous. Nat. Jul. 4. (143:24.)
 By William Rose Benét. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Apr. 18. (11.)
 By William Soskin. Books. Apr. 12. (5.)
 By Edith H. Walton. N.Y. Times. Apr. 19. (6.)

Hardy, Thomas.

- By Ford Madox Ford. A. Merc. Aug. (38:438.)

Harris, George W.

- By Walter Blair. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Nov. 7. (3.)

Harte, Bret.

- By Jacob Blanck. Pub. W. Nov. 28. (130:2102.)
 By R. L. Duffus. N.Y. Times Mag. Aug. 23. (9.)
 By L. L. Mackall. Books. Aug. 30. (21.)

Hawthorne, Nathaniel.

- By Frederic I. Carpenter. N.E.Q. Jun. (9:253.)

- By Randall Stewart. A.L. Jan. (7:415.)
 By H. A. Turner. P.M.L.A. Jun. (51:543.)
 By Austin Warren. N.E.Q. Dec., '35. (8:480.)
- Hay, Ian.**
 By E. C. Beckwith. N.Y. Times. Jun. 21. (17.)
- Hecht, Ben.**
 By Charles Angoff. A. Sp. Apr. (59.)
 By W. R. B. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Feb. 8. (18.)
 By O. F. N. Rep. Feb. 26. (86:89.)
 By James T. Farrell. Books. Feb. 9. (2.)
 By Fred T. Marsh. N.Y. Times. Feb. 9. (7.)
 By James Neugass. N. Mass. Mar. 31. (26.)
 By Mark Van Doren. Nat. Mar. 4. (142:286.)
- Hemingway, Ernest.**
 By John Peale Bishop. N. Rep. Nov. 11. (89:39.)
 By Louis H. Cohn. Colophon. Summer, '35. (1:119.)
 By Granville Hicks. N. Mass. Nov. 19, '35. (23.)
 By Harry Sylvester. Com. Oct. 30. (25:10.)
 By Lowry Charles Wimberly. Fr. S. Fall. (10:208.)
- Henry, O.**
 By Carl Van Doren. Books. Nov. 15. (3.)
- Horgan, Paul.**
 By D. A. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Dec. 5. (53.)
 By Mary Ross. Books. Dec. 13. (6.)
 By Eda Lou Walton. N.Y. Times. Nov. 22. '36. (7.)
- Hudson, W. H.**
 By Ford Madox Ford. A. Merc. Mar. (37:306.)
- Hull, Helen.**
 Anonymous. Nat. Apr. 22. (142:528.)
 By William Rose Benét. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Mar. 28. (6.)
 By E. H. N. Rep. Apr. 22. (86:323.)
 By Mary Ross. Books. Mar. 29. (12.)
 By Edith H. Walton. N.Y. Times. Apr. 5. (22.)
- Hurston, Zora Neale.**
 By Sterling A. Brown. N. Mass. Feb. 25. (24.)
 By Thomas Caldecot Chubb. N.A. Rev. Mar. (241:181.)
- Huxley, Aldous.**
 By Theodore Maynard. Cath. W. Oct. (144:12.)
 By William Soskin. Books. May 31. (13.)
 By Leigh White. Nat. May 6. (142:588.)

I

- Irving, Washington.**
 By Jacob Blanck. Pub. W. Nov. 28. (130:2101.)
 By William R. Langfeld. A.L. May. (8:223.)
 By Ernest E. Leisy. S.W. Winter. (21:223.)
 By E. H. O'Neill. N.A. Rev. Mar. (241:161.)
 By Henry A. Pochmann. A.L. May. (8:217.)
 By Vernon L. Parrington. Frontier. Autumn. (17:60.)
 By W. A. Reichart. M.L.N. Jun. (51:388.)
 By Irving T. Richards. A.L. May. (8:170.)
 By Edward Wagenknecht. Va. Apr. (12:299.)
- Ivanov, Vsevolod.**
 By Alfred Kázin. Books. Jan. 12. (19.)

J

- James, Henry.**
 By Wilson Follett. N.Y. Times. Aug. 23. (2.)

Jewish Short Story.

By B. F. N. Rep. Feb. 12. (86:27.)

By Alfred Kazin. N.Y. Times. Jul. 19. (8.)

By Arpad Steiner. Com. Mar. 20. (23:587.)

Jones, Idwal.

By B. D.V. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Oct. 10. (35.)

By Edith H. Walton. N.Y. Times. Dec. 20. (7.)

Joyce, James.

By Robert Cantwell. N. Rep. Aug. 5. (87:375.)

K

King, Grace.

By John S. Kendall. La.H.Q. Apr. (19:436.)

Kipling, Rudyard.

By Stephen Vincent Benét. Books. Jan. 12. (1.)

By David P. Berenberg. Mod. M. Mar. (9:486.)

By Henry Seidel Canby. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Jan. 25. (3.) Nov. 7. (12.)

By Katharine Fullerton Gerould. Harp. M. Apr. (172:531.)

By Edmonia Hill. Atl. Apr. (157:406.)

By Alvin Johnson. Nat. Feb. 12. (142:192.)

By William McFee. N.Y. Times. Feb. 9. (2.)

By N. J. Michaelis. Books. Nov. 1. (4.)

By Christopher Morley. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Feb. 1. (11.)

By C. P. N.Y. Times. Nov. 8. (10.)

By Bhupal Singh. Asia. Mar. (36:187.)

Korner, B.

By Thomas Burke. A. Merc. Sept. (39:102.)

Kyne, Peter B.

By E. C. B. N.Y. Times. Oct. 18. (24.)

L

La Farge, Oliver.

By Dorothy Jones. S.W. Autumn, '35. (21:122.)

Lagerkoist, Pär.

By Dorothy Page. C. For. Oct. (29.)

Lagerlöf, Selma.

By Nils Afzelius. Scan. Winter. (24:372.)

By H. A. L. Scan. Winter. (24:371.)

By Mary Ross. Books. Sept. 20. (9.) Nov. 22. (3.)

By Harold Strauss. N.Y. Times. Oct. 11. (8.)

By Katherine Woods. N.Y. Times. Dec. 6. (10.)

Lane, Rose Wilder.

By C. C. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Jan. 11. (19.)

Lawrence, D. H.

By Mary M. Colum. For. Dec. (96:273.)

By F. W. Dupee. N. Mass. Nov. 10. (26.)

By Clifton Fadiman. N.Y. Oct. 17. (102.)

By Ford Madox Ford. A. Merc. Jun. (38:167.)

By Horace Gregory. Nat. Jul. 4. (143:20.)

By Harold W. Hawk. U.R. Autumn. (11.)

By Granville Hicks. N. Rep. Oct. 28. (88:358.)

By Peter Monro Jack. N.Y. Times. Nov. 29. (29.)

By Edgar Johnson. N. Rep. Sept. 16. (88:164.)

By Harry Thornton Moore. Nat. Oct. 24. (142:492.)

By Lorine Pruette. Books. May 24. (7.) Nov. 1. (16.)

By Theodore Spencer. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Oct. 31. (13.)

By Cuthbert Wright. N.Y. Times. Aug. 9. (8.)

Lockridge, Richard.

By Marion Sturges-Jones. Books. Sept. 27. (8.)

M

Manhood, H. A.

By Gladys Davis. C. For. Mar. (31.)

Mann, Thomas.

By Ben Belitt. Nat. Jun. 24. (142:814.)

By Malcolm Cowley. N. Rep. Jun. 24. (87:213.)

By Clifton Fadiman. N.Y. Jun. 6. (84.)

By Wilson Follett. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Jun. 6. (5.)

By Maurice Johnson. Pr. S. Fall. (10:239.)

By Louis Kronenberger. N.Y. Times. Jun. 7. (1.)

By Ferner Nuhn. Books. Jun. 7. (1.)

By Bryan M. O'Reilly. Cath. W. Dec. (144:371.)

Marquis, Don.

By Edith H. Walton. N.Y. Times. Nov. 22. (7.)

Maugham, W. Somerset.

By Florence Haxton Britten. Books. Feb. 23. (10.)

By Percy Hutchison. N.Y. Times. Feb. 23. (4.)

By William Lyon Phelps. Scr. Sept. (100:187.)

Melville, Herman.

By Frederic I. Carpenter. N.E.Q. Jun. (9:253.)

By Robert S. Forsythe. A.L. Mar. (8:85.)

By O. Wegelin. Colophon. Summer, '35. (1:24.)

Mercein, Eleanor.

By Katherine Simonds. Books. May 10. (10.)

By Edith H. Walton. N.Y. Times. May 10. (18.)

Moore, George.

Anonymous. Nat. Apr. 1. (142:427.)

By Padraic Colum. Esq. Mar. (62.)

By Oliver S. J. Gogarty. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Jul. 18. (3.)

By Horace Gregory. Books. Nov. 22. (1.)

By Edgar Johnson. N. Rep. Feb. 26. (86:80.)

By Edith Mirrieles. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Nov. 28. (7.)

By Henry Noyes. C. For. Apr. (22.)

By Horace Reynolds. N.Y. Times. Nov. 15. (1.)

By William Butler Yeats. N. Rep. Feb. 26. (86:64.) Apr. 22. (86:308.)

Muschler, Reinhold Conrad.

By Harold Strauss. N.Y. Times. Feb. 23. (7.)

O

O'Connor, Frank.

By Otis Ferguson. N. Rep. Jun. 3. (87:110.)

By Peter Monro Jack. N.Y. Times. Apr. 5. (7.)

By Fred T. Marsh. Books. Mar. 29. (12.)

By William Troy. Nat. Apr. 29. (142:556.)

O'Faoláin, Seán.

By E. H. W. N.Y. Times. Mar. 15. (20.)

P

Parker, Dorothy.

By Dorothy Dayton. Mad. Mar. (18.)

Paulding, J. K.

By Jacob Blanck. Pub. W. Nov. 28. (130:2101.)

Pirandello, Luigi.

By Delfino Cinelli. Nat. Dec. 26. (143:765.)

Poe, Edgar Allan.

Anonymous. R.N.L. Mar. 16.

By Killis Campbell. A.L. Jan. (7:463.) Tex. St. Jul. (16:107.)

- By John Cournos. N.Y. Times. Feb. 9. (16.)
 By Leonard B. Hurley. A.L. Jan. (7376.)
 By John Robert Moore. A.L. Mar. (832.)
 By Arlin Turner. A.L. Mar. (860.)
 By James Southall Wilson. Books. Feb. 9. (11.)
 Porter, Katherine Anne.
 By Josephine Herbst. N. Mass. Jan. 21. (25.)
 Pushkin, Alexander.
 By John Cournos. N.Y. Times. Dec. 6. (2.)
 By Alexander Kaun. Nat. Dec. 19. (143:738.)

R

- Rathbone, Charles Horace, Jr.
 By Harold Strauss. N.Y. Times. Sept. 6. (6.)
 Rice, Alice Hegan, and Cale Young Rice.
 By M. W. N.Y. Times. Nov. 15. (30.)
 Richter, Conrad.
 By V. L. O. Chittick. Frontier. Winter. (17:140.)
 By Charles J. Finger. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Aug. 8. (7.)
 By T. M. Pearce. N.M.Q. Aug. (6:234.)
 By Eda Lou Walton. Books. Aug. 2. (6.)
 By Stanley Young. N.Y. Times. Aug. 2. (7.)
 Roberts, Elizabeth Madox.
 By J. Donald Adams. Va. Jan. (12:80.)
 Robinson, Rowland E.
 By Edward Larocque Tinker. N.Y. Times. Jul. 12. (17.)

S

- Sabatini, Rafael.
 By B. S. N.Y. Times. Nov. 15. (35.)
 Salt, Sydney.
 By Parker Tyler. Car. Mar.
 Saroyan, William.
 By Charles Angoff. A. Sp. May. (57.)
 By Thomas Burke. A. Merc. Sept. (39:102.)
 By Clifton Fadiman. N.Y. Feb. 22. (79.)
 By Kenneth Fearing. Part. R. Apr. (30.)
 By Horace Gregory. Books. Feb. 23. (7.)
 By Louis Kronenberger. Nat. Mar. 25. (142:387.)
 By T. S. Matthews. N. Rep. Mar. 18. (86:172.)
 By Christine Stead. N. Mass. Mar. 17. (25.)
 By Harold Strauss. N.Y. Times. Feb. 23. (4.)
 SEDGWICK, ANNE DOUGLAS.
 Letters. Atl. Oct. (158:392.)
 Sedgwick, Anne Douglas.
 By H. S. C. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Oct. 10. (35.)
 By Mary Ross. Books. Oct. 11. (6.)
 By Basil de Selincourt. Fr. Sept. (96:111.)
 By Katherine Woods. N.Y. Times. Oct. 25. (4.)
 Sherman, Richard.
 By Louise Maunsell Field. N.Y. Times. Mar. 1. (21.)
 Short Story.
 By Louis Kronenberger. N.Y. Times. Dec. 6. (34.)
 By Marianne Moore. Nat. Dec. 5. (143:672.)
 Snelling, William Joseph.
 By V. L. O. Chittick. Frontier. Winter. (17:140.)
 By H. M. J. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Oct. 10. (38.)

Spender, Stephen.

- By Ben Belitt. Nat. Oct. 24. (143:492.)
- By L. Cabot Hearn. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Oct. 10. (34.)
- By Louis Kronenberger. N.Y. Times. Oct. 25. (24.)
- By T. S. Matthews. N. Rep. Oct. 28. (88:360.)
- By Walter Ralston. N. Mass. Sept. 29. (23.)
- By Milton Rugoff. Books. Oct. 4. (7.)

Stevenson, Robert Louis.

- By George S. Hellman. A. Merc. Jul. (38:342.)

Stockton, Frank R.

- Anonymous. A.L. Nov. (8:351.)
- By W. L. Pforzheimer. Colophon. Autumn, '35. (1:261.)
- By Edward Larocque Tinker. N.Y. Times. Mar. 1. (16.)

Stuart, Jesse.

- Anonymous. Nat. Jun. 17. (142:784.)
- By William Rose Benét. Sat. R. (N.Y.) May 2. (11.)
- By Thomas Burke. A. Merc. Sept. (39:102.)
- By Katherine Ellis. N. Mass. Aug. 18. (26.)
- By Ben Field. Part. R. Jun. (30.)
- By Joseph Harrison. Frontier. Autumn. (17:55.)
- By George Milburn. N. Rep. Jul. 1. (87:248.)
- By Charlotte Salmon. S.W. Winter. (21:163.)
- By Mark Van Doren. Books. May 3. (7.)
- By Edith H. Walton. N.Y. Times. Apr. 26. (6.)

Suckow, Ruth.

- By Josephine Herbst. N. Rep. Oct. 21. (88:318.)

Swinstead-Smith, K.

- By Eleanor Godfrey. C. For. Jul. (16:30.)

T

Terhune, Albert Payson.

- Anonymous. N.Y. Times. May 3. (19.)

Thanet, Octave.

- By Rebecca Sewell. S.W. Apr. (21:312.)

Thomas, Dorothy.

- Anonymous. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Aug. 1. (5.)
- By Clifton Fadiman. N.Y. Jul. 25. (62.)
- By Erna Fergusson. N.M.Q. Aug. (6:236.)
- By Elizabeth Hart. Books. Jul. 26. (8.)
- By George Milburn. N. Rep. Aug. 26. (88:82.)
- By Edith H. Walton. N.Y. Times. Jul. 26. (7.)

Tolstoy, Count Lyof N.

- Anonymous. N.Y. Times. Mar. 1. (8.)
- By Boris Eichenbaum. Sto. Feb. (2.)
- By V. Totomianz. Hai. Jan. 3. (5.)

Train, Arthur.

- By Charles P. Curtis, Jr. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Dec. 26. (5.)

Turgenev, Ivan.

- By Ford Madox Ford. A. Merc. Sept. (39:41.)

TWAIN, MARK.

- Letter. Book News. Autumn, '35.

Twain, Mark.

- By Richard D. Altick. S.A.Q. Oct., '35. (34:359.)
- Anonymous. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Jan. 11. (8.)
- By M. M. Brashear. Va. Jan. (12:127.)
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MAGAZINE AVERAGES

JANUARY 1 TO DECEMBER 31, 1936

The following table includes the averages of distinctive stories in twenty American periodicals. One, two, and three asterisks are employed to indicate relative distinction. 'Three-asterisk stories' are considered worth reprinting in book form. The list excludes reprints. Figures in columns three and six represent stories with one or more asterisks: figures in columns four and seven, stories with two or more asterisks. figures in columns five and eight, stories with three asterisks.

PERIODICALS	Number of Stories Published	Number of Distinctive Stories Published			Percentage of Distinctive Stories Published		
		*	**	***	*	**	***
American Magazine	97	8	0	0	8	0	0
American Mercury	15	13	9	7	87	60	47
American Prefaces	24	22	14	4	92	58	17
Atlantic Monthly	17	17	13	8	100	76	47
Cosmopolitan	98	9	4	2	9	4	2
Esquire	159	79	30	16	50	19	10
Frontier and Midland	29	23	9	3	79	31	10
Harper's Bazaar (New York)	48	19	11	3	40	23	6
Harper's Magazine	21	16	12	5	76	57	24
Literary America	33	11	2	1	33	6	3
Manuscript	56	12	0	0	21	0	0
New Writers	26	9	3	1	35	12	4
Partisan Review	19	16	4	1	80	20	5
Pictorial Review	66	6	3	2	9	4	3
Prairie Schooner	20	7	2	1	35	10	5
Red Book Magazine	90	8	3	2	9	3	2
Saturday Evening Post	231	34	3	2	15	1	1
Scribner's Magazine	46	35	24	10	76	52	22
Southern Review	16	16	15	9	100	94	56
Story	99	89	65	36	89	65	36

The following tables indicate the rank, by number and percentage of distinctive short stories published, of ten periodicals coming within the scope of my examination which have published an average of 50 per cent or more of distinctive stories. The list excludes reprints, but not translations.

BY PERCENTAGE

1. Atlantic Monthly	100%	6. Partisan Review	80%
2. Southern Review	100%	7. Frontier and Midland	79%
3. American Prefaces	92%	8. Scribner's Magazine	76%
4. Story	89%	9. Harper's Magazine	76%
5. American Mercury	87%	10. Esquire	50%

BY NUMBER

1. Story	89	6. Atlantic Monthly	17
2. Esquire	79	7. Southern Review	16
3. Scribner's Magazine	35	8. Partisan Review	16
4. Frontier and Midland	23	9. Harper's Magazine	16
5. American Prefaces	22	10. American Mercury	13

The following periodicals have published during the same period seven or more 'two-asterisk' stories. The list excludes reprints, but not translations.

1. Story	65	7. New Yorker	13
2. Esquire	30	8. Harper's Magazine	12
3. Scribner's Magazine	24	9. Harper's Bazaar (New York)	11
4. Southern Review	15	10. Hairenik	10
5. American Prefaces	14	11. American Mercury	9
6. Atlantic Monthly	13	12. Frontier and Midland	9

The following periodicals have published during the same period four or more 'three-asterisk stories.' The list excludes reprints, but not translations.

1. Story	36	6. American Mercury	7
2. Esquire	16	7. Harper's Magazine	5
3. Scribner's Magazine	10	8. American Prefaces	4
4. Southern Review	9	9. New Yorker	4
5. Atlantic Monthly	8		

Ties in the above lists have been decided by taking relative rank in other lists into account.

DISTINCTIVE SHORT STORIES IN AMERICAN MAGAZINES

1936

NOTE. Only distinctive stories are listed. The list includes a few American stories published in British periodicals. One, two or three asterisks are used to indicate relative distinction. Titles of stories with three asterisks qualify for the 'Roll of Honor.' The figures in parentheses refer to the volume and page number of the magazine. Where successive issues of a magazine are not paged consecutively, only the page number is given. While every effort has been made to indicate correctly the nationality of the authors, I assume no personal responsibility for the accuracy of my classification in this or in other lists.

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- ABEL, HILDE.
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*What've We Got to Lose? Man. Dec. (3.)
- ADAMS, BILL.
*Ordeal of a Sailor. Esq. Mar. (36.)
- ALDEN, HENRY.
**Thirteen, Fourteen, Maids A-Courting. Am. P. Summer. (1:172.)
- ALLEN, HERVEY.
*Blood Lust. Cos. Jul. (24.)
- AMIRIAN, LEMUEL.
*Pilgrimage. Hai. May 1. (5.)
*Return from Darkness. Hair. Jul. 10. (4.) Jul. 17. (4.)
- ANDERSON, SHERWOOD.
**Mountain Marriage. Fight. Oct. (16.)
***Nice Girl. N.Y. Jul. 25. (15.)
- ANTON, HENRY.
*Corn-Fed. N.Y. Sept. 19. (18.)
*Trombonist Extraexceptional. N.Y. Sept. 26. (14.)
- APPEL, BENJAMIN.
*Night Court Monologue. Man. Dec. (55.)
**Oh, Mother... Scr. Oct. (42.)
- ARDOONY, ZEPHUR.
*Dying Cigarette. Hai. Aug. 14. (3.)
- ARGULLA, MANUEL E.
**Heat. Fr. S. Fall. (10:219.)
**How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife. Sto. Feb. (42.)
- ARMEN, GRANT K.
*Son. Hai. Aug. 28. (4.) Sept. 4. (4.)
- ASCH, NATHAN.
*Route 61. N. Rep. Jan. 15. (85:280.)
*Stopover. Part. R. Mar. (16.)

ASHE, HARRY.

- *Guy in the Red Pants. Esq. Apr. (70.)
- ASWELL, JAMES R.
*No Chitlins. Sto. Oct. (85.)

B

- BAHR, JEROME.
*Father Patko. Sto. Nov. (81.)
- BALLOWE, HEWITT L.
*Blunderer. Esq. May. (79.)
*Pierre, He Forget. Esq. Sept. (120.)
*Slave Jaquot. Esq. Jul. (112.)
*Spell of Moonsickness. Esq. Mar. (44.)
- BEADLE JOHN A.
**Hunter's Delight. Am. P. Dec. (247.)
- BEAM, LURA.
*Twenty-four. Yale. Summer. (25:726.)
- BEARNSON, MARGARET SHERROD.
***Ander Okius an' de Lion. Sto. Feb. (82.)
- BELL, THOMAS.
**When We Were Young. Sto. Nov. (65.)
- BEMELMANS, LUDWIG.
*Inside, Outside. Sto. Oct. (65.)
*Theodore and the Blue Danube. Sto. May. (37.)
- BENEDICT, LIBBY.
***Decision. T.T. Jul. 18. (17:1038.)
- BENÉT, STEPHEN VINCENT.
*Blood of the Martyrs. S.E.P. Dec. 12 (5.)
*Devil and Daniel Webster. S.E.P. Oct. 24. (8.)
*Silver Jemmy. Cos. Feb. (56.)

- BENSON, SALLY.
 *Her Own Things. N.Y. Jun. 6. (13.)
 *Really Living. N.Y. Feb. 8. (18.)
 *Romance. N.Y. Jun. 20. (17.)
 *Suite 2049. N.Y. Mar. 14. (18.)
 *Time Will Come. N.Y. Jul. 11. (14.)
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 *I Am Going Home. Esq. Jul. (62.)
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- BERTON, SHIRLEY.
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- BEZZERIDES, A. I.
 *Fortune Teller. Hal. Nov. 6. (4)
 **Man Who Was Not Killed. Esq. Feb. (28.)
 **River. Scr. Sept. (100:184.)
 *White Mule. Sto. Mar. (72.)
- BIRD, VIRGINIA.
 *I Have Is a Circle. Scr. Feb. (99:82.)
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 *Story's End. Esq. Aug. (119.)
- BOONE, JACK.
 **It Sure Whips Me. Sto. Jun. (91.)
- BOONE, JACK, and MABLE CONNELLY.
 *Some Old. Hal. Sept. (7.)
- BOORNIAZIAN, ANNIE HATCH.
 **We Are Armenians. Hal. Jul. 3. (4.)
- BOOTH, ERNEST.
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- BOWEN, PHIL.
 *Red Clav. Fight. Jan. (8.)
- BOYKIN, CHARLES.
 *At Bay. Tan. Mar. (3.)
- BOYLE, KAY.
 **Career. Spect. Jul. 17. (94.)
 **Friend of the Family. L. Merc. May. (19.)
 **How Bridie's Girl Was Won. Harp. M. Mar. (72:394.)
 **Lydia and the King-Dovers. L. Merc. Sept. (34:404.)
 *Volunteer. N.Y. May 16. (25.)
 **Winter in Italy. N. State. Sept. 26. (12:226.)
 **Your Body Is a Jewel Box. N.W. Feb. (3.)
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 *Her Own Good. Sto. Mar. (49.)
 *Silent Whistle. Sto. Jun. (13.)
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 *Birthday. N.Y. Nov. 21. (71.)
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 *Blue with White Dots. Part. R. Mar. (10.)
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 *Lady Alone. Harp. B. (N.Y.) Feb. (61.)
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 *Have the Honor to Invite You. Sto. Jun. (77.)
- BRUNELLI, ANTHONY.
 *Flaps Aloft. Scr. Jun. (99:345.)
- BRYAN, JACK YAMAM.
 **Hawa. Atl. May. (157:583.)
- BRYANT, DOLORES WALDORF.
 *Mighty Man. Frontier. Autumn. (179.)
- BUCK, ASHLEY.
 *These Were Also People. Lit. A. May. (1098.)
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 *Civitude. Scr. May. (90:265.)
 *Trust. Red Bk. Apr. (20.)
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 **Man Who Won the War. Atl. Feb. (157:208.)
- BURNT, FRANK.
 *Great George. S.E.P. Jan. 18. (12.)
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 **Hottest Battle. Chic. Trib. Apr. 26.
 **Last Equitation. Sto. Feb. (93.)
- BURNETT, WANDA.
 **Ten. Am. P. Mar. (1:93.)

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 *Head Man. A. Merc. Mar. (37:226.)
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 **Sunfield. Part. Spring. (5.)
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 *Harvest in the Ripened Years. W.H.C. Sept. (16.)
 **Poor Miss Maggie. Sto. Apr. (66.)
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*Doll. Tan. Jun. (11.)
*Magic Man. Sept.-Oct. (3.)
WENCE, MILFORD E.
**Good Bed. Am. P. Jan. (1:62.)
WENSLEY, EDITH.
*Bright Angel Trail. Manu. (107.)
WESCOTT, GLENWAX.
***Rescuer. L.L. Autumn. (150.)
***Sight of a Dead Body. Sig. Autumn.
(2:135.)
WHARTON, EDITH.
***Confession. Cos. May. (34.)
WHEELER, POST.
***Diviner and the Poor Woman. Asia.
Aug. (36:543.)
WHICKER, H. W.
*Bloody Lane. Frontier. Summer. (16:
285.)
WHITEHAND, ROBERT.
*Proletarian Tragedy. Am. P. Sum-
mer. (1:161.)
*Whithered Horizons. Am. P. Nov.
(2:23)

- WICKENDEN, DAN.
**Without End. Sto. Jun. (60.)
WILHELM, GALE.
*Unfinished Portrait. Lit. A. Apr. (3:
1049.)
WILKINS, MARGARET.
*Run from Your Mind. Mat. (68.)
WILLIAMS, BEN AMES.
*Head's Star. L.H.J. Oct. (36.)
*Recapture. C.G. Jan. (10.)
*Snatch at a Straw. C.G. Nov. (8.)
*Ways that Are Dark. C.G. Apr. (16.)
WILLIAMS, MARJORIE.
**Almost I Have Forgotten. Am. P.
Dec. (2:44.)
WILLIAMS, WILLIAM CARLOS.
***Face of Stone. N.D.
WILLIAMSON, HARVEY M.
**Birthday at the Gin. Sto. Oct. (50.)
WILLS, SEELDON.
*Migration. Cath. W. Oct. (144:23.)
WILSON, MARJORIE DAMSEY.
*Victoria Changes for a Local. N.Y.
Nov. 21. (17.)
WILSON, WILLIAM E.
***Saturday Morning. Sto. May. (68.)
WINSLOW, ILYRA SAMTER.
*Mrs. Manning's Birthday. Pict. R.
Apr. (8.)
WINTER, LOIS FOSTER.
*Lil White Angel. Manu. (46.)
WOLFE, THOMAS.
*Fame and the Poet. A. Merc. Oct.
(39:149.)
WOLFERT, IRA.
**In Right. Harp. M. Sept. (173:378.)
WOODS, AMY.
**Me for New York. Manu. (90.)
WOOLRICH, CORNELL.
**Night Reveals. Sto. Apr. (17.)
WRIGHT, GILBERT.
*Nothing Ever Happens. T.W. Mar.
1. (10.)
WRIGHT, WILSON.
***Arrival on a Holiday. Harp. M. Oct.
(173:535.)

Z

- ZARA, LOUIS.
*Blind Man's Buff. Esq. Mar. (76.)
*First Client. Esq. Oct. (68.)
**If Wishes Were Horses. Esq. Sept.
(92.)
*Letter Writer. Esq. Feb. (44.)
**Two Orphans. Esq. Apr. (82.)
ZINBERG, LEN.
**Leaner. Sto. Nov. (71.)
ZUGSMITH, LEANE.
***Amusing Story. Sto. Mar. (77.)

- *Mr. Milliner. N.Y. Mar. 28. (22.)
 **One Big Smile. Harp. B. (N.Y.) Jul. (43.)
 **Piece of Advice. N. Rep. Aug. 12. (88:15.)
 ***Room in the World. Sto. Aug. (56.)

II. CANADIAN AUTHORS

- ARMSTRONG, MATT MURRY.
 **Sideroad. C. For. Sept. (23.)
 BARNARD, LESLIE GORDON.
 *Cotton Cargo. C.H.J. Jan. (7.)
 CALLAGHAN, MORLEY.
 ***Enemy of the People. Scr. Sept. (100:139.)
 ***Fiddler on Twenty-Third Street. MacL. Dec. 15. (16.) Jo'L. Oct. 23. (36:149.)
 ***In the Big Town. Esq. Apr. (40.)
 ***It Must Be Different! Red Bk. Feb. (26.)
 *Pair of Long Pants. Red Bk. Oct. (36.)
 ***Their Mother's Purse. N.Y. Sept. 12. (15.)
 ***Voyage Out. N.Y. Jun. 27. (15.)
 ¶ **Watching and Waiting. Red Bk. Sept. (48.)
 DE LA ROCHE, MAZO.
 *Reunion. Pict. R. Feb. (10.)
 KENNEDY, RODERICK STUART.
 *Silver Child. Can. Jul. (3.)
 LE ROSSIGNOL, J. E.
 *Baptiste Waits. Can. May. (22.)
 MCILROY, KIMBALL.
 *Something to Tell You. C. For. Nov. (22.)
 MCNAUGHT, CARLTON.
 *High Hat. C. For. Jul. (18.)
 WILLISON, LADY MARJORY.
 *Hey, Diddle Diddle! Q.Q. Summer. (43:146.)

III. BRITISH AND IRISH AUTHORS

- AUSTIN, F. BRITTEN.
 *Egeria of the Revolution. S.E.P. Oct. 31. (18.)
 *Josephine Weds Bonaparte. S.E.P. Dec. 19. (18.)
 *Semiramis of the North. S.E.P. Jun. 6. (20.)
 BATES, H. E.
 ***Jonah and Bruno. Esq. Jan. (49.)
 BEACHCROFT, T. O.
 *Vicar's Lady. W.H.C. Aug. (22.)
 BOTTOMOE, PHYLLIS.
 **'Outsider.' Atl. Nov. (158:623.)
 BRIDGE, ANN.
 *Glass of Milk. Chic. Trib. Jun. 14.
 *Wooden Madonna. Chic. Trib. Aug. 2.
 *Pepita's Miracle. Chic. Trib. Sept. 20.
 BURKE, JOHN T.
 *Australian Horizon. Sto. Apr. (95.)
 CHESTERTON, G. K.
 ***Vampire of the Village. Chic. Trib. Sept. 27.
 COLUM, MARY M.
 **Meager Legend. Scr. Mar. (99:161.)
 CRONIN, A. J.
 *Wife of a Hero. Cos. Dec. (85.)
 DE LA MARE, WALTER.
 ***Physic. Harp. M. Aug. (173:258.)
 ***Strangers and Pilgrims. Yale. Spring. (25:488.)
 ***Trumpet. Va. Oct. (12:577.)
 DUNSANY, LORD.
 ***Grecian Singer. T.W. Mar. 8. (11.)
 ***House of Brass. T.W. Jun. 28. (12.)
 ***Invention of Dr. Caber. T.W. Sept. 6. (9.)
 ***Two Bottles of Relish. Sto. Feb. (50.)
 FLEMING, PETER.
 **Under the Bandstand. For. May. (95:312.)
 GREENE, GRAHAM.
 ***Chance for Mr. Lever. Sto. Jan. (9.)
 HILTON, JAMES.
 *Merry Christmas, Mr. Chips. McCall. Jan. (7.)
 *Pay as You Enter. T.W. Nov. 1. (3.)
 **Twilight of the Wise. T.W. Feb. 23. (3.)
 HOUSEHOLD, GEOFFREY.
 ***Kangaroo Loves Me. Atl. Apr. (157:416.)
 ***Salvation of Pisco Gagar. Atl. Jan. (157:1.)
 ***Technique. Atl. Feb. (157:150.)
 ***Water of Iturrigorri. Atl. Aug. (158:177.)
 HOUSMAN, LAURENCE.
 *Hidden Identity. Yale. Sept. (26:88.)
 HUXLEY, ALDOUS.
 ***Morning in Basle. Sto. Jul. (56.)
 KIPLING, RUDYARD.
 *Teem'—A Treasure-Hunter. Atl. May. (157:513.)
 LOFTS, NORAH.
 **Black Swan. Sto. Sept. (9.)
 McLAVERY, MICHAEL.
 *White Mare. Colum. Jan. (4.)

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- MANHOOD, H. A.
 ***Paradise Lost. Sto. Jul. (84.)
 MAUGHAM, W. SOMERSET.
 **Lotus Eater. Cos. Apr. (30.)
 **Voice of the Turtle. Cos. Nov. (24.)
 MORLEY, JOHN ROYSTON.
 ***Womankind. Sto. Dec. (11.)
 O'CONNOR, FRANK.
 ***Orpheus and His Lute. Esq. Jan. (92.)
 O'FAOLÁIN, SEÁN.
 ***Lonely Lives. Sto. Oct. (93.)
 ***Tall Coortier. Esq. Apr. (36.)
 ***Two Ways of Life. Sig. Spring.
 PALMER, J. W.
 **Night Flowers. Mad. Sept. (18.)
 PANTER-DOWNES, MOLLIE.
 *House of the Laburnums. Harp. M. Dec. (174-42.)
 *So Now Goodbye. Sto. Jun. (71.)
 ROBINSON, LENNOK.
 **Door. Harp. B. (N.Y.) Jul. (48.)
 SABATINI, RAFAEL.
 *Blood Money. Am. Jul. (60.)
 *Bogus Buccaneer. Am. Apr. (34.)
 *Lady and the Pirate. Am. May. (12.)
 *Out of the Dragon's Jaw. Am. Feb. (32.)
 *Rogue in Red. Am. Sept. (16.)
 SHARP, MARGERY.
 *Winning Sequence. Harp. M. Oct. (173-478.)
 STRONG, L. A. G.
 *Overcoat. Harp. B. (N.Y.) Oct. (177.)
 THOMAS, DYLAN.
 ***Mouse and the Woman. Transit. Fall. (43.)
 WARNER, SYLVIA TOWNSEND.
 *Passed with Honor. Fight. May. (5.)
 WAUGH, ALEC.
 *Ambition' Bevan. Harp. B. (N.Y.) Apr. (118.)
 WETJEN, ALBERT RICHARD.
 *Native Mind. Cos. Sept. (121.)
 WHITE, ERIC WALTER.
 ***Opatnostri! Sto. Jan. (72.)
 WILLIAMSON, HENRY.
 ***Crown of Life. Atl. Jan. (157-77.)

IV. TRANSLATIONS

- AGHASIAN, H. (Armenian.)
 *We Shall Return. Hai. Sept. 6, '35. (4.) Sept. 13, '35. (4.)
 ABARONIAN, AVETIS. (Armenian.)
 **Fish. Hai. Aug. 16, '35. (4.)
 *Ghegho's Land. Hai. Nov. 13. (4.) Nov. 20. (4.) Nov. 27. (3.) Dec. 4. (3.)
 AKUTAKAWA, RYUNOSKE. (Japanese.)
 ***Spies. I.L. No. 11. (35.)
 ***White Tasuki Detachment. I.L. No. 11. (32.)
 ARGUEDAS, JOSÉ MARÍA. (Peruvian.)
 *Schoolboys. I.L. No. 10. (3.)
 ASCH, SHALOM. (Yiddish.)
 ***Pitch Maker. J.F. Jun. (19-111.)
 BARTA, ALEXANDER. (German.)
 *Debt. I.L. No. 3. (29.)
 BRAATEN, OSKAR. (Norwegian.)
 **Homeward. Scan. Winter. (24-351.)
 BUCHOV, A. (Russian.)
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 BUZANT, ELLENE. (Armenian.)
 *On My Journey. Hai. Oct. 4, '35. (4.)
 ERENBURG, ILVA. (Russian.)
 *Without Drawing Breath. I.L. No. 2. (3.)
 GLAESER, ERNST. (German.)
 ***Six Men in the Woods. Cor. Dec. (76.)
 HAGALIN, GUDMUNDUR G. (Icelandic.)
 *Foxskin. Scan. Summer. (24-156.)
 'HAMASDEGH.' (Armenian.)
 *Chalo. Hai. Feb. 7. (5.)
 **Victim Was Uncle Gar. Hai. Sept. 11. (4.)
 ICAZA, JORGE. (Ecuadorian.)
 *Huassipungo. I.L. No. 2. (43.)
 ILIE, ILVA, and EUGENE PETROV. (Russian.)
 *Undesirable. Esq. Sept. (132.)
 ISJAGIN, FEDOR B. (Russian.)
 *Man Without Trousers. Harp. B. (N.Y.) Nov. (96.)
 KATAEV, VALENTIN. (Russian.)
 *Green Parakeet. Col. Apr. 11. (34.)
 KUROSHIMA, DENJI. (Japanese.)
 *Outpost. Fight. Sept. (16.)
 LATZKO, ANDREAS. (German.)
 *Duel by Candlelight. Esq. Jul. (30.)
 LAUSEN, MARCUS. (Danish.)
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 **Wanja. Scan. Spring. (24-62.)
 LORENZ, KAROLIN. (Austrian.)
 ***Fritzi. Pict. R. Apr. (17.)
 MALRAUX, ANDRÉ. (French.)
 **In the Heart of Darkness. Part. R. Feb. (10.)
 MANN, THOMAS. (German.)
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 ***Joseph Beholds Pharaoh. J.F. Jun. (19-104.)
 MAUROIS, ANDRÉ. (French.)
 ***Odd Dollar. Esq. Oct. (53.)
 MEHTERIAN, ELISE. (Armenian.)
 *Hampartoum. Hai. Nov. 8, '35. (4.)
 MESROB, LEVON. (Armenian.)
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 ***Mind Reader of Tivoli. Scan. Sept.
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 NAKOS, LILKA. (<i>Greek</i>)
 ***Son. Sto. Aug. (95.)
 OLESHA, URII. (<i>Russian</i>)
 *Aldebaran. I.L. No. 3. (24.)
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 ***Last Things. I.L. No. 4. (3.)
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 mastide. Am. P. Apr. (11:102.)
 STIPTER, ADALBERT. (<i>Austrian</i>)
 ***Christmas Eve. Cath. W. Dec. (144:
 280.)
 ZILAHY, LAJOS. (<i>Hungarian</i>)
 *Silver Winged Windmill. Esq. Jun.
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 ZOSTICHENKO, MIKHAIL. (<i>Russian</i>)
 *Golosh. N. Rep. Feb. 5. (85:366.)
 ZWEIG, ARNOLD. (<i>German</i>)
 ***Old Man of the Sea. Esq. Mar. (32.)
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THE END

